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For Mrs Lucy G. Speed, from whose pious hand I accepted the present of an Oxford Bible twenty years ago.
Washington, D.C. October 3, 1861
A. Lincoln.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

From a photograph sent to Mrs. Lucy G. Speed.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A HISTORY

BY JOHN G. NICOLAY
AND JOHN HAY

VOLUME FIVE

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.

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From a photograph bearing an inscription by Mr. Lincoln to Mrs. Lucy G. Speed, dated Washington, D. C., October 3, 1861.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

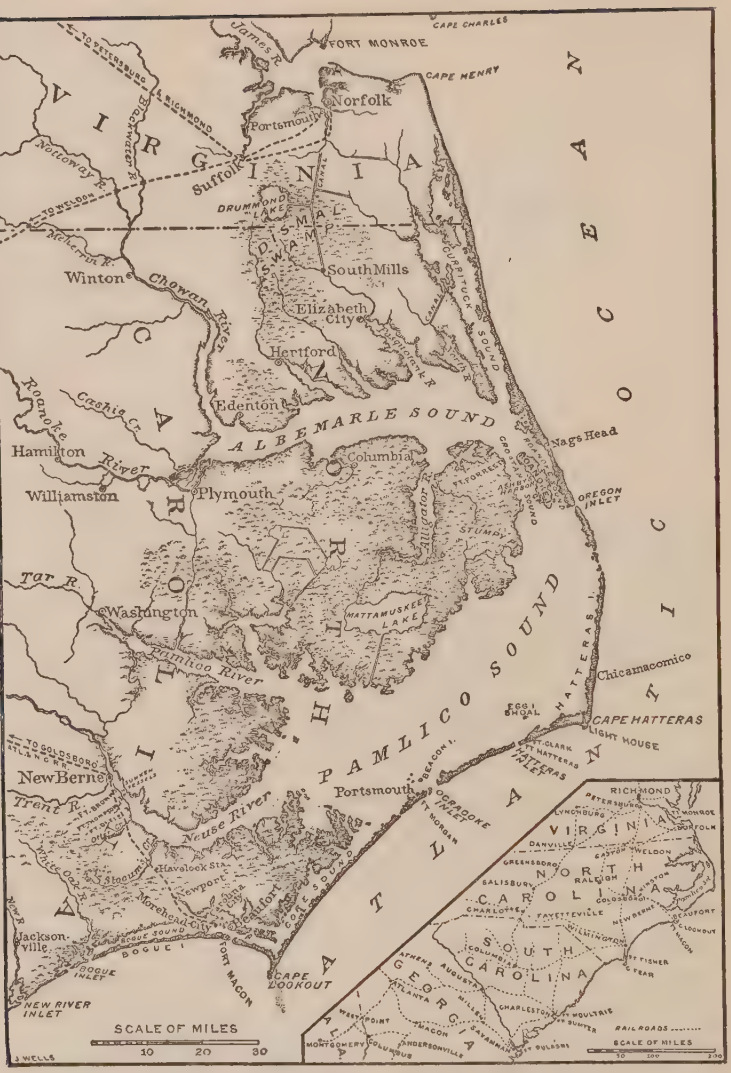
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CHAPTER I

HATTERAS AND PORT ROYAL

ONE of the first questions which the British Cabinet asked of the new American Minister sent to England by Mr. Lincoln was, whether the President was serious in his proclamation of a blockade of all the ports of the States in insurrection. The coast was very extensive, said Lord John Russell, stretching some three thousand miles along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico: "Was it the design of the United States to institute an effective blockade in its whole extent, or to make only a declaration to that effect as to the whole, and to confine the actual blockade to particular points?" Mr. Adams replied that he had every reason for affirming that the blockade would be made effective; that although the coast line was in reality very long, yet the principal harbors were comparatively few, only some seven to ten in number, and those not very easy of access. It would therefore not require so numerous a fleet to guard them as might appear at first thought.

Adams to Seward, May 21, 1861



MAP OF EARLY COAST OPERATIONS.

This reply to some extent satisfied the inquiry. But even had it been strictly accurate, the ability of the American Government to fulfill its announce-

ment might naturally have been doubted by foreign powers. Our navy was rapidly falling into decadence. Of its ninety ships more than one-half had become useless. Among the remaining number there were only about twenty-four that might be called really serviceable vessels, that is, those supplied with the indispensable modern adjunct of steam power. These however were, at the date of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, not immediately available. Thirteen of them were on distant foreign stations; two were returning home from Vera Cruz; two were stationed at Pensacola, tied up by the conditions of Mr. Buchanan's "Sumter and Pickens truce"; and only three steamships were in loyal ports, where they could be with certainty called to the instant service of the Government.[1]

If the Government had been compelled to deal with an established naval power; if the Administration had been less vigorous and prompt in its action; or, if the patriotism of the people of the North had lacked its striking unanimity, the want of a large fleet ready for service at a critical moment might have been followed by very serious consequences. On the whole, the favoring conditions were on the side of the Union. Notwith-

[1] The fleet before Charleston harbor consisted of the war steamers *Pawnee*, eight guns, *Pocahontas*, five guns, and the revenue cutter *Harriet Lane*, five guns.

The fleet before Pensacola consisted of the war steamers *Powhatan*, eleven guns, *Brooklyn*, twenty-five guns, *Wyandotte*, five guns, and the sailing ships, *Sabine*, fifty guns, *Macedonian*, twenty-two guns, and *St. Louis*, twenty guns.

These with the steamers *Crusader*, eight guns, *Mohawk*, five guns, the store-ship *Supply*, four guns, and the sailing ship *Cumberland*, twenty-four guns, constituted the whole naval force of the United States to which orders for immediate service could be given on the day when the President established the blockade.

CHAP. I. standing the rebels had received an acknowledgment of belligerent rights, the vigorous diplomacy of Mr. Seward deterred European powers from extending further concessions, and led them to await the actual experiment of establishing the blockade which had been announced. Secretary Welles made all possible haste to improvise a navy, and the rapidity with which he accomplished his task will remain the marvel of future generations.

In awarding the credit of the achievement, a due share must be allotted to the accomplished assistant secretary, Gustavus V. Fox, who had suggested and fitted out the Sumter expedition. Mr. Fox was a man of exceptional abilities, with an exceptional experience. He had passed eighteen years of his life in various grades of naval service from midshipman to lieutenant, including also detached service as captain of one of a line of coast merchantmen. Resigning his commission in 1856, he had since passed five years in charge of an important manufacturing establishment. To his thorough professional training was thus added a familiarity with the personnel and qualities of the navy on one hand, and the currents of thought and action in civil life on the other, which was of great value in his departmental duties. He had affable manners, a quick and accurate judgment, and an equipoise of personal bearing that neither elation of victory nor depression of defeat appeared ever to disturb or change. With such an assistant at his elbow Secretary Welles, from the first, was able to apply to every administrative act a professional scrutiny as to its need, fitness, and future effect which avoided

many mistakes at the beginning, and secured cumulative advantages.

The absent ships were ordered home, but with the exception of the steam frigate *Niagara*, which returned from Japan a fortnight after the fall of Sumter, help came slowly owing to the long distances orders had to be sent by mail. The ships of the Mediterranean squadron did not get back till midsummer, and those of the African squadron not till autumn. The first increase had therefore to be made by purchase and charter of merchant steamers, a resource which was promptly and largely resorted to. Every species of craft propelled by steam, which could be strengthened and fitted to carry a gun, was made to do war duty. The result was a motley collection of vessels; nevertheless, under the peculiar conditions, many of them rendered admirable service in the blockade, particularly those capable of considerable speed. While these extemporized cruisers were sent as rapidly as possible to blockade stations, the Navy Department began building new vessels with all the haste of which our public and private shipyards were capable. Seven sloops of war had been authorized by Congress prior to Mr. Lincoln's inauguration. These, with another of the same class, were immediately begun at the several navy yards; while twenty-three smaller gunboats were put under contract at private establishments, and some of them were ready for service in the autumn of 1861. Three ironclads were also designed and contracted for, and the early achievement of one of them became historic.

Foreign powers looked with incredulous eyes on

CHAP. I. these hasty and makeshift preparations. They could not recognize a war ship in an armed tug or ferry-boat, or expect that a vessel whose keel was not yet laid would be afloat in ninety days. More especially they could hardly anticipate that within a twelvemonth there would occur a sea-fight between novel maritime inventions so unlooked-for and startling as to revolutionize by that single contest the naval warfare of the world. It is probable that while politely listening, and apparently accepting our diplomatic promise to establish an effective blockade, they mentally reserved the expectation that in the actual condition of affairs we must inevitably fail, at least so far as to justify their intervention, either to raise the blockade or recognize the Confederate States as an independent nation, whenever their convenience or interest should dictate. One phase of American events was calculated to give foreign nations a truer impression, and to make them hesitate in their evident inclination to accept prematurely the dismemberment of the republic as a fixed fact. This was the popular unanimity of the North in its war sentiment and its unprecedented activity in pushing war measures, in furnishing volunteers, provisions, ships, and armaments in every available form, and in demonstrations urging upon the Government energy and action commensurate with the popular enthusiasm.

Under the proclamations of the President and instructions of the Navy Department, the blockade did not begin simultaneously at all points, but by notifications from the various ships or fleets at their several stations. Considerable time thus

elapsed before it became actually effective as international law required. That this did not give rise to serious complications was due to two causes: first, that foreign nations did not hastily press their inquiry, and second, that the insurgents were themselves so destitute of vessels and seamen that they could take no efficient countermeasures, either to break the blockade or evade it. Some advantage came to them from the unobstructed importation of war material during the delay. Gradually, blockading ships appeared before their several ports, and cut off their commerce. By the middle of July the blockade had become reasonably complete, and contraband trade could be carried on only by means of regular blockade-runners, a class of English-built steamers afterwards specially devised for concealment and speed.

A little later the whole question of the blockade underwent a new discussion. The President's proclamation establishing it was issued after the fall of Sumter, when war measures had to be adopted under the stress of an immediate necessity which left no time for deliberate examination. In the absence of statutory provisions this seemed the only expedient at hand to shut off the commerce of the world from the rebellious States. At the special session of Congress an act was passed, and approved by the President, giving the Executive authority to close insurrectionary ports; and many persons contended that this procedure ought, even now, to be adopted. The Cabinet was divided on the question; and the Secretary of the Navy submitted a long written opinion favoring the latter course. He contended that

July 13, 1861.

CHAP. I.

a blockade was in some degree a recognition of belligerency; that we had a right to treat the question as a municipal one; that such an attitude would better conform to our denial of the right of secession, or of *de facto* separation. He did not however propose to withdraw the blockading fleet; that would need to remain on duty as a police force to prevent actually the interdicted commerce. While there was much force in this argument as a theory, it had to give way to considerations of expediency. Foreign powers almost unanimously protested against a change of this character. They seem to have based their objection chiefly upon the fear that what is known as a mere paper blockade would be attempted in this form. Mr. Seward asserted our municipal right to close the ports equally with Mr. Welles, but thought it wiser to adhere to the blockade under rules of international law, as offering less room for misunderstandings with foreign nations. And the President's well-considered policy from the first was, by every prudential act to avoid any pretext for intervention, or the dangerous complication of a foreign war.

Welles, Opinion, Aug. 5, 1861. MS.

The Confederates resorted to a judicious and energetic use of the limited naval resources at their command. They made all haste to extemporize and commission privateers; but so great was their lack of vessels that only one of them made anything like a successful cruise during the first year of the war. This was the *Sumter*, a screw-steamer of 500 tons, formerly in passenger service between Havana and New Orleans. Fitted out and armed with five guns, she succeeded in making her escape through the blockade at the mouth of the

Mississippi, towards the end of June; and continued her cruise, mainly in the Caribbean Sea, and along the South American coast, capturing and burning American merchantmen, until the following January. A number of war ships were sent in pursuit, but they failed to find her till she sailed for European waters, and entered the harbor of Cadiz for repairs. From there she went to Gibraltar, where, unable immediately to obtain coal, she was delayed until three United States vessels arrived and maintained a watch from neighboring ports with a view to her capture; and this circumstance with others compelled her abandonment and sale, after having made in all some eighteen captures, of which number she bonded two and burned seven.

Raphael Semmes, "Cruise of the *Alabama* and *Sumter*." Vol. I., p. 254.

Other privateers extemporized during the first year of the war, while they became a serious annoyance to American commerce, generally had a shorter career. Of those captured only the *Savannah* requires special mention. She was a schooner of fifty-three tons burthen with one pivot gun, and was fitted out as a privateer at Charleston, from which port she sailed on her cruise on the 2d of June, 1861. She captured a merchant brig on the following day about fifty miles east of Charleston, and the same afternoon gave chase to another vessel, which she supposed would fall an easy prey. She soon discovered that she had made a serious mistake; the stranger proved to be the United States brig-of-war *Perry*, which in turn overhauled and captured the *Savannah* about nightfall. The privateersmen, thirteen in number, were taken off their vessel and sent to New-York. They were given in charge of the United States marshal, and

CHAP. I. 1861.

placed in confinement; and on the 16th of July the Grand Jury of the United States Circuit Court indicted them for the crime of robbery on the high seas. The capture of the prisoners of course came to the knowledge of the rebel Government at Richmond, through the reports printed in the Northern newspapers, coupled with rumors of their probable trial and execution as pirates, under the President's proclamation. On the strength of these reports, Jefferson Davis, some ten days before the actual indictment, wrote a letter to President Lincoln, which he transmitted by flag of truce through the military lines. In this letter he gave notice that, as a measure of retaliation for the alleged treatment of the privateersmen, he had caused certain Union prisoners taken by the rebel forces to be placed in strict confinement, and that the Confederate Government "will deal out to the prisoners held by it the same treatment and the same fate as shall be experienced by those captured in the *Savannah*." When, a short time afterwards, the battle of Bull Run occurred, in which the Confederates captured a number of Union colonels and other officers, this intention of the Richmond authorities to make summary retaliation was further manifested by a rigorous treatment of the new captives.

A. F. Warburton, "Trial of the Officers and Crew of the Privateer *Savannah*."

Davis to Lincoln, July 6, 1861. MS.

President Lincoln made no reply to the letter of Mr. Davis. The indicted prisoners were brought into court, and on July 23d pleaded not guilty. An array of eminent counsel appeared for both the prosecution and the defense; but on account of the illness of Justice Nelson of the United States Supreme Court, sitting with the District

1861.

Judge, the trial was finally postponed till the third Monday of October. Before that date the operations of the war, both military and naval, were expanded to such a degree, and the number of prisoners captured, of other privateersmen, as well as of the land forces, had already become so considerable as to compel a radical change of practice in their treatment and disposition. It grew evident that even if the crime of piracy could be legally proven against these offenders, their wholesale punishment by execution could not be thought of, particularly by an Executive whose humane impulses were so active as those of President Lincoln. When the *Savannah* prisoners were brought to trial in October, after long and exhaustive arguments of opposing counsel, the jury failed to agree, and was discharged by the court. The prisoners were remanded to custody; but in January of the following year negotiations were begun for a general exchange, and though some delay occurred, the arrangement was brought into effectual operation in August, 1862, at which time the *Savannah* privateersmen, together with some seventy or eighty others, were exchanged; and the question of their legal status was not thereafter raised.

CHAP. I.

Warburton, "Trial," etc.

1862.

Annual Cyclopædia, 1862, pp. 712–714.

Among the earliest needs which the actual beginning of the blockade pointed out was the possession of suitable harbors, on the coast of the insurrectionary States, which might be used as coal depots and as points of rendezvous or harbors of refuge for the blockading fleet. The Navy Department convened a board of competent officers early in July to study this problem. Meanwhile another opportunity for a successful naval exploit

CHAP. I. presented itself, which was promptly taken advantage of, the success of which, amid the gloom of recent disasters, was hailed with eager joy by the people of the North.

The sea front of the State of North Carolina has a double coast; and behind the outer one, which is a mere narrow belt of sand not more than two miles wide, there expand the great inland waters of Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. There are but few practicable entrances through this outer sand-bank or false coast; in latter times Hatteras Inlet had become the most important. Here the rebels had built two forts and armed them with guns brought from the Norfolk navy yard: Fort Hatteras, nearest the inlet, with fifteen guns, and Fort Clark, half a mile to the north, with seven guns. The blockading fleet soon discovered that this was a point of the utmost importance; that the light rebel privateers could lie here securely in wait for passing prizes, dart out and seize them, and quickly retire beyond pursuit; also, that an unfrequented point like this offered special opportunities for the comparatively safe and easy entrance of blockade-runners.

An expedition for its capture was therefore organized, as soon as the necessary vessels could be
1861. collected in Hampton Roads. On the 26th of August, Flag-Officer Silas H. Stringham sailed from Fort Monroe in command of five war steamers and two transports, carrying about eight hundred troops under command of Major-General Benjamin F. Butler. After a little more than a day's sail, the fleet appeared before Hatteras Inlet, and on the two days following both forts were captured by

the attacking vessels, with a comparatively short and easy bombardment, the delay having been occasioned by unfavorable winds. The casualties were slight: in the forts, twelve or fifteen were killed or died of wounds, and thirty-five wounded remained; on the fleet, there was not a single loss of life. The garrisons, comprising seven hundred and fifty men, were formally surrendered on August 29.

Stringham, Report, Sept. 2, 1861, in "Message and Documents," 1861–62. Part III., pp. 46–48. Also Butler, Report, Aug. 30, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., pp. 581–587.

The original design was to block up the entrance by sinking vessels, but upon examination both commanders united in the more prudent determination to hold and utilize the place. "This inlet," reported Stringham, "I consider the key to all the ports south of Hatteras, and only second in importance to Fort Monroe and Hampton Roads." Major-General John E. Wool, who had been sent (August 17) to take command at Fort Monroe, joined in this opinion. General Butler immediately returned to Washington to report the joint victory, and upon his representations the President and Cabinet at once decided and ordered measures to hold possession of the captured forts. What was still more to the point, cheering evidence soon came of the existence of a friendly sentiment among the scattered residents of Hatteras Island and points on the neighboring mainland. The officer sent to command Fort Clark, under date of September 11, expressed his belief in the loyalty of the people on Pamlico Sound, and "that troops could be raised here for the purpose of suppressing rebellion in North Carolina, upon the assurance that they would not be called on to go out of the State," which was the occasion of the fol-

Stringham to Welles, Sept. 2, 1861. "Message and Documents," 1861–62. Part III., p. 53.

Wool to Gen. Scott, Sept. 2, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 580.

Hawkins to Wool, Sept. 11, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 609.

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lowing characteristic letter from President Lincoln to General Scott:

MY DEAR SIR: Since conversing with you I have concluded to request you to frame an order for recruiting North Carolinians at Fort Hatteras. I suggest it to be so framed as for us to accept a smaller force — even a company — if we cannot get a regiment or more. What is necessary to now say about officers you will judge. Governor Seward says he has a nephew (Clarence A. Seward, I believe) who would be willing to go and play colonel and assist in raising the force. Still, it is to be considered whether the North Carolinians will not prefer officers of their own. I should expect they would.

Lincoln to Gen. Scott, Sept. 16, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 613.

Before the expedition against Hatteras set sail, preparations for another naval expedition on a more extended scale were under way. It will be remembered that the "Anaconda" plan of General Scott contemplated that the insurgent States should be completely enveloped. Such a course necessarily comprised eventual military possession of the entire coast line, and this was a part of the problem to be studied by the board of officers who had been convened by the Navy Department on June 28. Careful reports made by the board on July 5 and 13 recommended that either Bull's Bay, Port Royal Sound, or Fernandina should be, if possible, captured and occupied, both to facilitate the blockade and to furnish a base for military operations. Accordingly, orders were issued on August 2 and August 11 to Brigadier-General Thomas W. Sherman to proceed to New England and recruit an expeditionary land force of twelve thousand men, while Captain Samuel F. Du Pont, of the navy, was instructed to gather a fleet of vessels at Hampton Roads to be

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Thomas A. Scott to Sherman, Aug. 2 and 11, 1861. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 168.

used in the same movement. When General Sherman (who must not be confounded with General William Tecumseh Sherman, afterwards the famous leader of the march to the sea) was called to Washington, President Lincoln, in presence of the Cabinet, explained to him that this expedition was specially favored by General Scott; described in a general way its extent and purpose; directed that the utmost secrecy be observed, both as to its organization and probable point of descent; and expressed the wish of himself and his Cabinet that it should be ready to start early in September. CHAP. I.

Fuller consideration, however, recalled the fact that this was the unhealthy season, and the time of starting was afterwards postponed to October. 1861. The details were settled by General Scott and a military council of the most experienced officers. Obstacles and delays arose, as a matter of course. Before Sherman had more than three of his twelve regiments in camp on Long Island, where he proposed to drill and equip them, he was summoned to Washington with his whole command to help meet the danger of a rumored movement of the enemy against the capital. Here the remainder of his force was gathered, in constant competition with the all-absorbing accumulation of the grand Army of the Potomac, and not without apprehension that his command would be dribbled away in fragments to this or to some one of the many urgent calls for troops which beset the Administration from every quarter. "To guard against misunderstanding," wrote Lincoln to the Secretary of War, September 18, "I think fit to say that the joint expedition of the army and

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navy, . . . in which General T. W. Sherman was and is to bear a conspicuous part, is in no wise to be abandoned, but must be ready to move by the first or very early in October. Let all preparations go forward accordingly."

Lincoln to Cameron, Sept. 18, 1861. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 171.

Instead of the first, it was the end of October before the expedition got off. On the 29th, a fleet of fifty sail, including transports, went to sea from Fort Monroe, the naval force under command of Captain Du Pont. The following day brought a severe storm, in which two or three transports with supplies were lost, and others put back for safety. The main fleet, however, assembled on the 4th of November before Port Royal Sound, and on the 7th, fourteen war steamers, carrying a total armament of 130 guns, stood in to the attack of the rebel forts at the Port Royal entrance. To the north, on Bay Point, stood Fort Beauregard, mounting twenty guns. To the south, on Hilton Head, stood Fort Walker, a much stronger work, mounting twenty-three guns. A broad sheet of water, two miles in width, spread between the two forts. Both were formidable earthworks, scientifically constructed, and armed with ordnance of no mean power. Fort Walker had a garrison of about 250 men, and the plan of attack marked this out as the principal obstacle to overcome.

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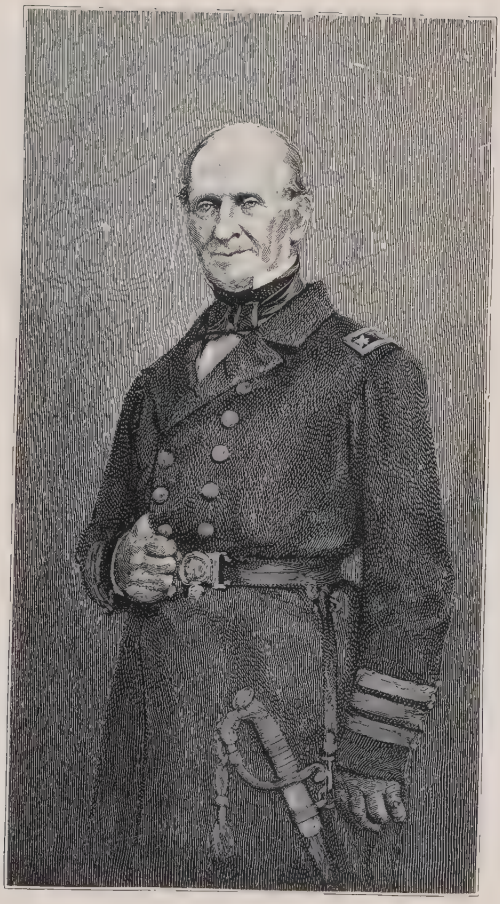
Everything being ready, and the weather fine, in the early forenoon of the 7th nine of the principal war steamers, with a total of 112 guns, formed in a line following each other at a distance of little more than a ship's length, with Du Pont leading in the flag-ship *Wabash* of forty-four guns. Moving



REAR-ADMIRAL SILAS H. STRINGHAM.

slowly and taking continual soundings as they proceeded, the line steamed by the mid-channel into the entrance between the two forts, firing to the right against Fort Beauregard in the distance, and to the left against Fort Walker at close range. When the *Wabash* had passed perhaps two miles beyond the forts, she made a short circuit to the south and led the line outward through the entrance and as near Fort Walker as the depth of water permitted, the ships successively delivering their fire at a distance of six hundred yards. When the proper point was reached the *Wabash* again turned and led the line inward, repeating the circular manœuvre. Meanwhile a flanking column of five ships with thirty guns had also passed in and stationed itself at a convenient distance where it could at the same time bombard Fort Walker and watch the little rebel fleet which hovered up the sound beyond range.

A description of such a manœuvre may be read in a minute, but it took more than an hour to execute each circuit of the ships. During this time the Confederate garrison of Fort Walker was defending its station with courage and persistence. Amid shot and shell which plowed up their embankments, buried them in showers of sand, dismounted their guns, and swept off the gunners, they replied to the fire of the ships, though the damage they inflicted was trifling and mainly to the rigging, showing their wild aim and the disturbance and difficulty under which they fought. When near one o'clock the *Wabash* turned and for the third time led the line inward past the forts the battle was decided. Fort Walker gave no re-

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sponse. Commander John Rodgers—who was in the *Wabash* as volunteer aide to the flag-officer, wrote:

> Shell fell in it, not twenty-eight in a minute, but as fast as a horse's feet beat the ground in a gallop. The resistance was heroic—but what could flesh and blood do against such a fire? . . . The *Wabash* was a destroying angel—hugging the shore; calling the soundings with cold indifference; slowing the engine, so as only to give steerage way; signaling to the vessels their various evolutions; and at the same time raining shells, as with target-practice, too fast to count. Commodore Du Pont had kindly made me his aide. I stood by him, and I did little things which I suppose gained me credit. So when a boat was sent on shore to ask whether they had surrendered, I was sent. I carried the stars and stripes. I found the ramparts utterly desolate, and I planted the American flag upon those ramparts with my own hands —first to take possession, in the majesty of the United States, of the rebel soil of South Carolina. The Confederate forces were in an utter panic; they deserted everything. Arms, tents, personal property were abandoned, and by men intent only upon safety and spurred by overwhelming fear.

Rodgers, Nov. 9, 1861. Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. III. Documents, p. 112.

The casualties numbered: in the forts, killed eleven, wounded forty-eight; on the ships, killed eight, wounded twenty-three. Fort Beauregard was abandoned the same evening, and the Union flag was raised over it at sunrise next morning. Upon examination during the few days following, it was found that the terror and flight of the enemy extended to all the adjacent islands. It had been intended, after the reduction and occupation of these forts, that the expedition should immediately proceed to the attack and capture of Fernandina, Florida. But the large expenditure of ammunition in the attack just made compelled

the war ships to wait for a new supply; while General Sherman on landing found the conquest so extensive as to require all his force and facilities. He said:

> We had no idea, in preparing the expedition of such immense success. We found to our surprise that, instead of having difficult work to get one harbor, after one harbor was obtained we had a half a dozen important harbors at once. Such a panic was created among the enemy by the fall of Port Royal that they deserted the whole coast from the North Edisto to Warsaw Sound. This threw into our possession not only the harbor of Port Royal, but the magnificent harbor of St. Helena, and the harbors of North Edisto, South Edisto, Tybee Roads, Warsaw Sound, and Ossabaw Sound. . . There is a network of waters, an inland water communication, running all the way from Charleston to Savannah.

Sherman, Testimony, Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

The Fernandina expedition was therefore deferred, and the army bent its energies to the erection of suitable forts to protect the territory and harbors which had been gained. It was indeed a magnificent acquisition. Port Royal was the finest harbor on the Southern coast, deep enough for the largest vessels, roomy enough to hold the navies of the world; twenty miles from Savannah, thirty miles from Charleston — nearly midway between them. This was, if not the territorial, at least the agricultural heart of South Carolina; the famous Sea-Island region, which grows the best cotton in the world; the seat of fine plantations, of aristocratic families, of idyllic Southern homes, the pride and the delight of a society upheld by slavery; hospitable mansions, embowered in gardens of roses, oleanders, and oranges, terminating picturesquely long and venerable live-oak avenues. Near

CHAP. I. by was Beaufort, the salubrious pleasure-town of the wealthy planters, where the aspiring statesmen of South Carolina had plotted treason and rebellion for a generation. Instead of realizing the dreams of splendor and power which led them astray, this grim visitation of the "Lincoln gunboats" was their first fruit of the war they had kindled; every white inhabitant in flight; every homestead deserted, and the slaves wandering idly over the abandoned plantations, or pillaging in unrestrained license among the furniture, clothing, and trinkets which lay scattered and desecrated in the once proud homes of their masters.

CHAPTER II

THE "TRENT" AFFAIR

THE public mind would probably have dwelt with more impatience and dissatisfaction upon the inaction of the armies, but for an event which turned all thoughts with deep solicitude into an entirely different channel. This was what is known as the *Trent* affair, which seriously threatened to embroil the nation in a war with Great Britain. The Confederate Government had appointed two new envoys to proceed to Europe and renew its application for recognition, which former diplomatic agents had failed to obtain. For this duty ex-Senator James M. Mason of Virginia and ex-Senator John Slidell of Louisiana were selected, on account of their political prominence, as well as their recognized ability. On the blockade-runner *Theodora*, they, with their secretaries and families, succeeded in eluding the Union cruisers round Charleston, and in reaching Havana, Cuba. Deeming themselves beyond danger of capture, they made no concealment of their presence or mission, but endeavored rather to "magnify their office." The British consul showed them marked attention, and they sought to be presented officially to the Captain-General of Cuba; but that wary function-

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CHAP. II. ary explained that he received them only as "distinguished gentlemen." They took passage on board the British mail steamer *Trent* for St. Thomas, intending there to take the regular packet to England.

Captain Charles Wilkes, commanding the United States war steamer *San Jacinto*, just returned from an African cruise, heard of the circumstance, and, going to Havana, fully informed himself of the details of their intended route. The *Trent*, he
1861. learned, was to leave Havana on the 7th of November. That day found him stationed in the old Bahama channel, near the northern coast of Cuba, where he had reason to believe she would pass. At about noon of the 8th the lookout announced the approach of the *Trent*, and when she was sufficiently near, the *San Jacinto* fired a round-shot across her course, and displayed the American colors. The British steamer did not seem disposed to accept the warning and failed to slacken her speed, whereupon Captain Wilkes ordered a shell to be fired across her bows, which at once brought her to. Lieutenant D. M. Fairfax, with two officers and a guard of marines, left the *San Jacinto* and rowed to the mail steamer; the lieutenant mounted to the deck alone, leaving his officers and men in the boat. He was shown to the quarter-deck, where he met Captain Moir of the *Trent*, and, informing him who he was, asked to see his passenger-list. Captain Moir declined to show it. Lieutenant Fairfax then told him of his information that the rebel commissioners were on board and that he must satisfy himself on that point before allowing the steamer to proceed. The envoys and their

secretaries came up, and, hearing their names mentioned, asked if they were wanted. Lieutenant Fairfax then made known in full the purport of his orders and the object of his visit, to seize the Confederate officials.

The altercation called a considerable number of passengers around the group. All of them manifested open secession sympathy, and some indulged in abusive language so loud and demonstrative that the lieutenant's two officers, and six or eight armed men from the boat, without being called, mounted to the lieutenant's assistance. In these unfriendly demonstrations the mail agent of the *Trent*, one Commander Williams, a retired British naval officer, made himself especially conspicuous with the declaration that he was the "Queen's representative," and with various threats of the consequences of the affair. The captain of the *Trent* firmly but quietly refused all compliance or search, and the envoys and their secretaries protested against arrest, whereupon Lieutenant Fairfax sent one of his officers back to the *San Jacinto* for additional force. In perhaps half an hour the second boat returned from the *San Jacinto* with some twenty-four additional men. Lieutenant Fairfax now proceeded to execute his orders without actual violence, and with all the politeness possible under the circumstances. Mason and Slidell, and their secretaries, foreseeing the inevitable, had retired to their state-rooms to pack their luggage; thither it was necessary to follow them, and there the presence of the families of Slidell and Eustis created some slight confusion, and a few armed marines entered the cabin, but were sent back.

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The final act of capture and removal was then carried out with formal stage solemnity.[1]

Captain Wilkes's first instruction to Lieutenant Fairfax was to seize the *Trent* as a prize, but, as he afterwards explained: "I forebore to seize her, however, in consequence of my being so reduced in officers and crew, and the derangement it would cause innocent persons, there being a large number of passengers, who would have been put to great loss and inconvenience as well as disappointment from the interruption it would have caused them in not being able to join the steamer from St. Thomas to Europe." The *Trent* was allowed to proceed on her voyage, while the *San Jacinto* steamed away for Boston, where she arrived on the 24th of November, and transferred her prisoners to Fort Warren.

Report, Secretary of the Navy, Dec. 2, 1861.

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The whole country rang with exultation over the exploit. The feeling was greatly heightened by

[1] "When the marines and some armed men had been formed," reports Lieutenant Fairfax, "just outside of the main deck cabin, where these four gentlemen had gone to pack up their baggage, I renewed my efforts to induce them to accompany me on board, they still refusing to accompany me unless force was applied. I called in to my assistance four or five officers, and first taking hold of Mr. Mason's shoulder, with another officer on the opposite side, I went as far as the gangway of the steamer, and delivered him over to Lieutenant Greer, to be placed in the boat. I then returned for Mr. Slidell, who insisted that I must apply considerable force to get him to go with me. Calling in at last three officers, he also was taken in charge and handed over to Mr. Greer. Mr. McFarland and Mr. Eustis, after protesting, went quietly into the boat." "There was a great deal of excitement on board at this time," says another report, "and the officers and passengers of the steamer were addressing us by numerous opprobrious epithets, such as calling us pirates, villains, traitors, etc." The families of Slidell and Eustis had meanwhile been tendered the use of the cabin of the *San Jacinto*, if they preferred to accompany the prisoners; but they declined, and proceeded in the *Trent*. [Report, Secretary of the Navy, Dec. 2, 1861.]

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the general public indignation at the unfriendliness England had so far manifested to the Union cause; but perhaps more especially because the two persons seized had been among the most bitter and active of the secession conspirators. The public press lauded Captain Wilkes, Boston gave him a banquet, and the Secretary of the Navy wrote him a letter of emphatic approval. He congratulated him "on the great public service" he had rendered in the capture, and expressed only the reservation that his conduct in omitting to capture the vessel must not be allowed to constitute a precedent. When Congress met on the 2d of December following, the House of Representatives immediately passed a resolution, without a dissenting voice, thanking Captain Wilkes for his "brave, adroit, and patriotic conduct"; while by other resolutions the President was requested to order the prisoners into close confinement, in retaliation for similar treatment by the rebels of certain prisoners of war. The strong current of public feeling approved the act without qualification, and manifested an instant and united readiness to defend it.

Welles, in "The Galaxy," May, 1873, p. 649.

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President Lincoln's usual cool judgment at once recognized the dangers and complications that might grow out of the occurrence. A well-known writer has recorded what he said in a confidential interview on the day the news was received: "I fear the traitors will prove to be white elephants. We must stick to American principles concerning the rights of neutrals. We fought Great Britain for insisting, by theory and practice, on the right to do precisely what Captain Wilkes has done. If

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Great Britain shall now protest against the act, and demand their release, we must give them up, apologize for the act as a violation of our doctrines, and thus forever bind her over to keep the peace in relation to neutrals, and so acknowledge that she has been wrong for sixty years." [1]

Lossing, "Civil War in the United States." Vol. II., pp. 156, 157.

The Cabinet generally coincided in expressing gratification and approval. The international questions involved came upon them so suddenly that they were not ready with decided opinions concerning the law and policy of the case; besides, the true course obviously was to await the action of Great Britain.

The passengers on board the *Trent*, as well as the reports of her officers, carried the news of the capture directly to England, where the incident raised a storm of public opinion even more violent than that in the United States, but very naturally on the opposite side. The Government of England relied for its information mainly upon the official report of the mail agent, Commander Williams, who had made himself so officious as the "Queen's representative," and who, true to the secession sympathies manifested by him on shipboard, gave his report a strong coloring of the same character.

[1] Mr. Welles, Secretary of the Navy, corroborated the statement in "The Galaxy" for May, 1873, p. 647: "The President, with whom I had an interview immediately on receiving information that the emissaries were captured and on board the *San Jacinto*, before consultation with any other member of the Cabinet discussed with me some of the difficult points presented. His chief anxiety — for his attention had never been turned to admiralty law and naval captures — was as to the disposition of the prisoners, who, to use his own expression, would be elephants on our hands that we could not easily dispose of. Public indignation was so overwhelming against the chief conspirators that he feared it would be difficult to prevent severe and exemplary punishment, which he always deprecated."

English public feeling, popular and official, smarted under the idea that the United States had perpetrated a gross outrage, and the clamor for instant redress left no room for any calm consideration of the far-reaching questions of international law involved. There seemed little possibility that a war could be avoided, and England began immediate preparations for such an emergency. Some eight thousand troops were dispatched to Canada, ships were ordered to join the English squadrons in American waters, and the usual proclamation issued prohibiting the export of arms and certain war supplies.

Two days after the receipt of the news Lord Palmerston, in a note to the Queen, formulated the substance of a demand to be sent to the United States. He wrote, November 29, 1861:

> The general outline and tenor which appeared to meet the opinions of the Cabinet would be, that the Washington Government should be told that what has been done is a violation of international law and of the rights of Great Britain, and that your Majesty's Government trust that the act will be disavowed, and the prisoners set free and restored to British protection; and that Lord Lyons should be instructed that, if this demand is refused, he should retire from the United States.

T. Martin, "Life of the Prince Consort." Vol. V., p. 420.

On the following day the formal draft of the proposed dispatch to Lord Lyons was laid before the Queen, who, together with Prince Albert, examined it with unusual care. The critical character of the communication, and the imminent danger — the almost certainty — of a rupture and war with America which it revealed, made a profound impression upon both. Prince Albert was already suffering from the illness which terminated his life

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two weeks afterwards. This new and grave political question gave him a sleepless night. "He could eat no breakfast," is the entry in her Majesty's diary, "and looked very wretched. But still he was well enough on getting up to make a draft for me to write to Lord Russell, in correction of his draft to Lord Lyons, sent me yesterday, which Albert did not approve."

The Queen returns these important drafts, which upon the whole she approves; but she cannot help feeling that the main draft — that for communication to the American Government — is somewhat meager. She should have liked to have seen the expression of a hope that the American captain did not act under instructions, or, if he did, that he misapprehended them — that the United States Government must be fully aware that the British Government could not allow its flag to be insulted, and the security of her mail communications to be placed in jeopardy; and her Majesty's Government are unwilling to believe that the United States Government intended wantonly to put an insult upon this country, and to add to their many distressing complications by forcing a question of dispute upon us; and that we are therefore glad to believe that upon a full consideration of the circumstances of the undoubted breach of international law committed, they would spontaneously offer such redress as alone could satisfy this country, viz., the restoration of the unfortunate passengers and a suitable apology.

Martin, "Life of the Prince Consort." Vol. V., p. 422.

It proved to be the last political memorandum he ever wrote. The exact language of his correction, had it been sent, would not have been well calculated to soothe the irritated susceptibilities of Americans. To the charge of "violating international law," to which Palmerston's cold note confined itself, he added the accusation of "wanton insult," though disclaiming a belief that it was intended. But a kind and pacific spirit shines

through his memorandum as a whole, and it is evident that both the Queen and himself, gratefully remembering the welcome America had lately accorded the Prince of Wales, shrank from the prospect of an angry war. In this the Queen unconsciously responded to the impulse of amity and good-will which had induced the President to modify so materially his foreign secretary's dispatch of the 21st of May, the unpremeditated thought of the ruler, in each case, being at once wiser and more humane than the first intention of the diplomatists. It was from the intention rather than the words of the Prince that the Queen's ministers took their cue and modified the phraseology into more temperate shape. Earl Russell wrote: CHAP. II. 1861.

Her Majesty's Government, bearing in mind the friendly relations which have long subsisted between Great Britain and the United States, are willing to believe that the United States naval officer who committed this aggression was not acting in compliance with any authority from his Government, or that, if he conceived himself to be so authorized, he greatly misunderstood the instructions he had received. For the Government of the United States must be fully aware that the British Government could not allow such an affront to the national honor to pass without full reparation, and her Majesty's Government are unwilling to believe that it could be the deliberate intention of the Government of the United States unnecessarily to force into discussion between the two Governments a question of so grave a character, and with regard to which the whole British nation would be sure to entertain such unanimity of feeling. Her Majesty's Government, therefore, trust that when this matter shall have been brought under the consideration of the Government of the United States, that Government will of its own accord offer to the British Government such redress as alone would satisfy the British nation, namely,

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Earl Russell to Lord Lyons, Nov. 30, 1861. British "Blue Book."

the liberation of the four gentlemen and their delivery to your Lordship, in order that they may again be placed under British protection, and a suitable apology for the aggression which has been committed. Should these terms not be offered by Mr. Seward, you will propose them to him.

In the private note accompanying this formal dispatch further instruction was given, that if the demand were not substantially complied with in seven days, Lord Lyons should break off diplomatic relations and return with his whole legation to London. Yet at the last moment Lord Russell himself seems to have become impressed with the browbeating precipitancy of the whole proceeding, for he added another private note, better calculated than even the Queen's modification to soften the disagreeable announcement to the American Government. He wrote to Lord Lyons:

Inclosure in No. 49, British "Blue Book."

My wish would be that at your first interview with Mr. Seward you should not take my dispatch with you, but should prepare him for it and ask him to settle it with the President and the Cabinet what course they will propose. The next time you should bring my dispatch and read it to him fully. If he asks what will be the consequence of his refusing compliance, I think you should say that you wish to leave him and the President quite free to take their own course, and that you desire to abstain from anything like menace.

This last diplomatic touch reveals that the Ministry, like the Queen, shrank from war, but that it desired to reap all the advantages of a public menace, even while privately disclaiming one. The British demand reached Washington on the 19th of December. It happened, fortunately, that Lord Lyons and Mr. Seward were on excellent terms of

personal friendship, and the British envoy was therefore able to present the affair with all the delicacy which had been suggested by Lord Russell. The Government at Washington had carefully abstained from any action other than that already mentioned. Lord Lyons wrote: CHAP. II.

> Mr. Seward received my communication seriously and with dignity, but without any manifestation of dissatisfaction. Some further conversation ensued in consequence of questions put by him with a view to ascertain the exact character of the dispatch. At the conclusion he asked me to give him to-morrow to consider the question and to communicate with the President.

Lyons to Russell, Dec. 19, 1861

Another dispatch from Lord Lyons shows that Mr. Seward asked a further delay, and that Lord Russell's communication was not formally read to him till Monday, the 23d of December. If we may credit the statement of Secretary Welles, Mr. Seward had not expected so serious a view of the affair by the British Government; and his own language implies as much when, in a private letter some months afterward, he mentions Lord Lyons's communication as "our first knowledge that the British Government proposed to make it a question of offense or insult, and so of war," adding: "If I had been as tame as you think would have been wise in my treatment of affairs with that country, I should have no standing in my own." But while Mr. Seward, like most other Americans, was doubtless elated by the first news that the rebel envoys were captured, he readily discerned that the incident was one of great diplomatic gravity and likely to be fruitful of prolonged diplomatic contention. Evidently in this spirit, and

Ibid., Dec. 23, 1861. British "Blue Book."

Seward to Weed, Mar. 7, 1862. "The Galaxy," Aug., 1870.

CHAP. II. for the purpose of reserving to the United States every advantage in the serious discussion which was unavoidable, he prudently wrote in a confi-

1861. dential dispatch to Mr. Adams, on November 27: "I forbear from speaking of the capture of Messrs. Mason and Slidell. The act was done by Commodore Wilkes without instructions, and even without the knowledge of the Government. Lord Lyons has judiciously refrained from all communication with me on the subject, and I thought it equally

State Department Archives. MS. wise to reserve ourselves until we hear what the British Government may have to say on the subject."

Of the confidential first interviews between the Secretary of State and the President on this important topic there is no record. From what remains we may easily infer that the President clearly saw the inevitable necessities surrounding the question, and was anxiously searching some method of securing for the United States whatever of indirect advantage might accrue from compliance with the British demand, and of making that compliance as palatable as might be to American public opinion. In this spirit we may presume he wrote the following experimental draft of a dispatch, preserved in his autograph manuscript. Its chief proposal is to arbitrate the difficulty, or in the alternative seriously to examine the question in all its aspects, and out of them to formulate a binding rule for both nations to govern similar cases. It was an honest and practical suggestion to turn an accidental quarrel into a great and durable transaction for the betterment of international law.

The dispatch of her Majesty's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, dated the 30th of November, 1861, and of which

REAR-ADMIRAL CHARLES WILKES.

your Lordship kindly furnished me a copy, has been carefully considered by the President; and he directs me to say that if there existed no fact or facts pertinent to the case, beyond those stated in said dispatch, the reparation sought by Great Britain from the United States would be justly due, and should be promptly made. The President is unwilling to believe that her Majesty's Government will press for a categorical answer upon what appears to him to be only a partial record, in the making up of which he has been allowed no part. He is reluctant to volunteer his view of the case, with no assurance that her Majesty's Government will consent to hear him; yet this much he directs me to say, that this Government has intended no affront to the British flag, or to the British nation; nor has it intended to force into discussion an embarrassing question, all which is evident by the fact hereby asserted, that the act complained of was done by the officer without orders from, or expectation of, the Government. But being done, it was no longer left to us to consider whether we might not, to avoid a controversy, waive an unimportant though a strict right; because we too, as well as Great Britain, have a people justly jealous of their rights, and in whose presence our Government could undo the act complained of only upon a fair showing that it was wrong, or at least very questionable. The United States Government and people are still willing to make reparation upon such showing. CHAP. II.

Accordingly I am instructed by the President to inquire whether her Majesty's Government will hear the United States upon the matter in question. The President desires, among other things, to bring into view, and have considered, the existing rebellion in the United States; the position Great Britain has assumed, including her Majesty's proclamation in relation thereto; the relation the persons whose seizure is the subject of complaint bore to the United States, and the object of their voyage at the time they were seized; the knowledge which the master of the *Trent* had of their relation to the United States, and of the object of their voyage, at the time he received them on board for the voyage; the place of the seizure; and the precedents and respective posi-

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tions assumed, in analogous cases, between Great Britain and the United States.

Upon a submission containing the foregoing facts, with those set forth in the before-mentioned dispatch to your Lordship, together with all other facts which either party may deem material, I am instructed to say, the Government of the United States will, if agreed to by her Majesty's Government, go to such friendly arbitration as is usual among nations, and will abide the award.

Or, in the alternative, her Majesty's Government may, upon the same record, determine whether any, and if any, what, reparation is due from the United States; provided no such reparation shall be different in character from, nor transcend, that proposed by your Lordship, as instructed in and by the dispatch aforesaid; and provided further, that the determination thus made shall be the law for all future analogous cases between Great Britain and the United States.

Lincoln, MS.

We may suppose that upon consultation with Mr. Seward, Mr. Lincoln decided that, desirable as this proceeding might be, it was precluded by the impatient, inflexible terms of the British demand. Only three days of the seven-days' grace remained; if they should not by the coming Thursday agree to deliver Mason and Slidell, the British legation would close its doors, and the consternation of a double war would fill the air. It is probable, therefore, that, even while writing this draft, Lincoln had intimated to his Secretary of State the need of finding good diplomatic reasons for surrendering the prisoners.

A note of Mr. Seward shows us that the Cabinet meeting to consider finally the *Trent* question was appointed for Tuesday morning, December 24; but the Secretary says that, availing himself of the President's permission, he had postponed it to

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Wednesday morning, at 10 A. M., adding, "I shall then be ready." It is probably true, as he afterwards wrote,[1] that the whole framing of his dispatch was left to his own ingenuity and judgment, and that neither the President nor any member of the Cabinet had arrived at any final determination. The private diary of Attorney-General Bates supplies us some additional details: "Cabinet council at 10 A. M., December 25, to consider the relations with England on Lord Lyons's demand of the surrender of Mason and Slidell; a long and interesting session, lasting till 2 P. M. The instructions of the British minister to Lord Lyons were read. . . There was read a draft of answer by the Secretary of State." CHAP. II. 1861.

The President's experimental draft quoted above was not read; there is no mention of either the reading or the points it raised. The whole discussion appears to have been confined to Seward's paper. There was some desultory talk, a general comparing of rumors and outside information, a reading of the few letters which had been received from Europe. Mr. Sumner, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, was invited in, and read letters he had received from John Bright and Richard Cobden, Liberal members of the British Parliament and devoted friends of the Union.

[1] "The consideration of the *Trent* case was crowded out by pressing domestic affairs until Christmas Day. It was considered on my presentation of it on the 25th and 26th of December. The Government, when it took the subject up, had no idea of the grounds upon which it would explain its action, nor did it believe that it would concede the case. Yet it was heartily unanimous in the actual result after two days' examination, and in favor of the release. Remember that in a council like ours there are some strong wills to be reconciled." Seward to Weed, Jan. 22, 1862. T. W. Barnes, "Memoir of Thurlow Weed." Vol. II., p. 409.

CHAP. II. During the session also there was handed in and read the dispatch just received from his Government by M. Mercier, the French minister, and which, in substance, took the English view of the matter. The diary continues:

> Mr. Seward's draft of letter to Lord Lyons was submitted by him, and examined and criticized by us with apparently perfect candor and frankness. All of us were impressed with the magnitude of the subject, and believed that upon our decision depended the dearest interest, probably the existence, of the nation. I, waiving the question of legal right,— upon which all Europe is against us, and also many of our own best jurists,— urged the necessity of the case; that to go to war with England now is to abandon all hope of suppressing the rebellion, as we have not the possession of the land, nor any support of the people of the South. The maritime superiority of Britain would sweep us from all the Southern waters. Our trade would be utterly ruined, and our treasury bankrupt; in short, that we must not have war with England.
>
> There was great reluctance on the part of some of the members of the Cabinet — and even the President himself — to acknowledge these obvious truths; but all yielded to, and unanimously concurred in, Mr. Seward's letter to Lord Lyons, after some verbal and formal amendments. The main fear, I believe, was the displeasure of our own people — lest they should accuse us of timidly truckling to the power of England.[1]

Bates, Diary. MS.

The published extracts from the diary of Secretary Chase give, somewhat fully, his opinion on the occasion:

> Mr. Chase thought it certainly was not too much to expect of a friendly nation, and especially of a nation of the same blood, religion, and characteristic civilization

[1] For permission to examine and quote from the manuscript diary of Attorney-General Bates, the authors are indebted to the courtesy of his son, Richard Bates.

as our own, that in consideration of the great rights she would overlook the little wrong; nor could he then persuade himself that, were all the circumstances known to the English Government as to ours, the surrender of the rebel commissioners would be insisted upon. The Secretary asserted that the technical right was undoubtedly with England. . . Were the circumstances reversed, our Government would, Mr. Chase thought, accept the explanation, and let England keep her rebels; and he could not divest himself of the belief that, were the case fairly understood, the British Government would do likewise. "But," continued Secretary Chase, "we cannot afford delays. While the matter hangs in uncertainty the public mind will remain disquieted, our commerce will suffer serious harm, our action against the rebels must be greatly hindered, and the restoration of our prosperity — largely identified with that of all nations — must be delayed. Better, then, to make now the sacrifice of feeling involved in the surrender of these rebels, than even avoid it by the delays which explanations must occasion. I give my adhesion, therefore, to the conclusion at which the Secretary of State has arrived. It is gall and wormwood to me. Rather than consent to the liberation of these men, I would sacrifice everything I possess. But I am consoled by the reflection that, while nothing but severest retribution is due to them, the surrender under existing circumstances is but simply doing right — simply proving faithful to our own ideas and traditions under strong temptations to violate them — simply giving to England and the world the most signal proof that the American nation will not under any circumstances, for the sake of inflicting just punishment on rebels, commit even a technical wrong against neutrals."

R. B. Warden, "Life of Chase," pp. 393, 394.

In these two recorded opinions are reflected the substantial tone and temper of the Cabinet discussion, which ended, as both Mr. Bates and Mr. Seward have stated, in a unanimous concurrence in the letter of reply as drawn up by the Secretary of State. That long and remarkably able docu-

CHAP. II. ment must be read in full, both to understand the wide range of the subject which he treated and the clearness and force of his language and argument. It constitutes one of his chief literary triumphs. There is room here only to indicate the conclusions arrived at in his examination. First, he held that the four persons seized and their dispatches were contraband of war; second, that Captain Wilkes had a right by the law of nations to detain and search the *Trent;* third, that he exercised the right in a lawful and proper manner; fourth, that he had a right to capture the contraband found. The real issue of the case centered in the fifth question: "Did Captain Wilkes exercise the right of capturing the contraband in conformity with the law of nations?" Reciting the deficiency of recognized rules on this point, Mr. Seward held that only by taking the vessel before a prize court could the existence of contraband be lawfully established; and that Captain Wilkes having released the vessel from capture, the necessary judicial examination was prevented, and the capture left unfinished or abandoned.

Mr. Seward's dispatch continued:

> I trust that I have shown to the satisfaction of the British Government, by a very simple and natural statement of the facts and analysis of the law applicable to them, that this Government has neither meditated, nor practised, nor approved any deliberate wrong in the transaction to which they have called its attention, and, on the contrary, that what has happened has been simply an inadvertency, consisting in a departure by the naval officer, free from any wrongful motive, from a rule uncertainly established, and probably by the several parties concerned either imperfectly understood or entirely unknown. For this error the British Government has a right to expect the same reparation that we, as an inde-

pendent State, should expect from Great Britain or from any other friendly nation in a similar case. . . If I decide this case in favor of my own Government I must disavow its most cherished principles, and reverse and forever abandon its essential policy. The country cannot afford the sacrifice. If I maintain those principles and adhere to that policy, I must surrender the case itself. . . The four persons in question are now held in military custody at Fort Warren, in the State of Massachusetts. They will be cheerfully liberated.

Seward to Lyons, Dec. 26, 1861.

With the formal delivery of Mason and Slidell and their secretaries to the custody of the British minister, the diplomatic incident was completed on the part of the United States. Lord Russell, on his part, while announcing that her Majesty's Government differed from Mr. Seward in some of the conclusions at which he had arrived,[1] nevertheless

[1] In a dispatch to Lord Lyons of Jan. 23, 1862, in which he discussed the questions at some length, Lord Russell held: first, that Mason and Slidell and their supposed dispatches, under the circumstances of their seizure, were not contraband; secondly, that the bringing of the *Trent* before a prize court, though it would alter the character, would not diminish the offense against the law of nations. It is somewhat interesting to read in this connection the following passage in the recently published "Life of Lord John Russell," by Spencer Walpole, which states that the advice given by the law officers of the British Crown was in almost exact conformity with the positions taken by Mr. Seward:

"The Confederate States appointed two gentlemen, Messrs. Mason and Slidell, to proceed to Europe, accredited to the English and French Governments respectively. These gentlemen embarked at Charleston on the *Nashville*, succeeded in running the blockade, and landed in Cuba. It was correctly assumed that they would embark at Havana on the *Trent*, a West Indian mail steamer, and travel in her to Europe; it was believed that the Government of the United States had issued orders for intercepting the *Trent* and for capturing the envoys; and it was noticed that a Federal man-of-war had arrived at Falmouth, and after coaling had proceeded to Southampton. Lord Russell laid these facts before the law officers; and was advised that a United States man-of-war, falling in with a British mail steamer, would have the right to board her, open her mail bags, examine their contents, and, if the steamer should prove liable to confiscation for carrying

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acknowledged that the action of the American Government constituted "the reparation which her Majesty and the British nation had a right to expect." It is not too much to say that not merely the rulers and Cabinets of both nations, but also those of all the great European powers, were relieved from an oppressive apprehension by this termination of the affair.

Russell to Lyons, Jan. 10, 1862.

If from one point of view the United States suffered a certain diplomatic defeat and humiliation, it became, in another light, a real international victory. The turn of affairs placed not only England, but France and other nations, distinctly on their good behavior. In the face of this American example of moderation they could no longer so openly brave the liberal sentiment of their own people by the countenance they had hitherto given the rebellion. So far from improving or enhancing the hostile mission of Mason and Slidell, the adventure they had undergone served to diminish their importance and circumscribe their influence. The very act of their liberation compelled the British authorities sharply to define the hollow pretense under which they were sent. In his instructions to the British Government vessel which received them at Provincetown and conveyed them to England, Lord Lyons wrote: "It is hardly necessary

dispatches from the enemy, put a prize crew on board and carry her to a port of the United States for adjudication. In that case the law officers thought she might, and in their opinion she ought to, disembark the passengers on the mail steamer at some convenient port. But they added, 'she would have no right to remove Messrs. Mason and Slidell, and carry them off as prisoners, leaving the ship to pursue her voyage.' A few days before the law officers gave this opinion the *San Jacinto*, an American war steamer, intercepted the *Trent* and did the very thing which the law officers had advised she had no right to do."

Spencer Walpole, "Life of Lord John Russell." Vol. II., pp. 344, 345.

that I should remind you that these gentlemen have no official character. It will be right for you to receive them with all courtesy and respect, as private gentlemen of distinction; but it would be very improper to pay to them any of those honors which are paid to official persons."

Lyons to Commander Hewett, Dec. 30, 1861 British "Blue Book."

The same result in a larger degree awaited their advent in Europe. Under the intense publicity of which they had been the subject, officials of all degrees were in a measure compelled to avoid them as political "suspects." Mason was received in England with cold and studied neglect; while Slidell, in France, though privately encouraged by the Emperor Napoleon III., finally found himself a victim, instead of a beneficiary, of his selfish schemes.

CHAPTER III

THE TENNESSEE LINE

IN the State of Kentucky the long game of political intrigue came to an end as the autumn of 1861 approached. By a change almost as sudden as a stage transformation-scene, the beginning of September brought a general military activity and a state of qualified civil war. This change grew naturally out of the military condition, which was no longer compatible with the uncertain and expectant attitude the State had hitherto maintained. The notes of preparation for Frémont's campaign down the Mississippi could not be ignored. Cairo had become a great military post, giving the Federal forces who held it a strategical advantage both for defense and offense, against which the Confederates had no corresponding foothold on the great river. The first defensive work of the latter was Fort Pillow, 215 miles below, armed with only twelve 32-pounders. To oppose a more formidable resistance to Frémont's descent was of vital importance, which General Polk's West Point education enabled him to realize. But the Mississippi, with its generally level banks, afforded relatively few points capable of effective defense. The one most favorable to the Confederate needs was at

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Columbus, in the State of Kentucky, eighteen miles below Cairo, on a high bluff commanding the river for about five miles. Both the Union and Confederate commanders coveted this position, for its natural advantages were such that when fully fortified it became familiarly known as the "Gibraltar of the West." So far, through the neutrality policy of Kentucky, it had remained unappropriated by either side. On the first day of September, General Polk, the rebel commander at Memphis, sent a messenger to Governor Magoffin to obtain confidential information about the "future plans and policy of the Southern party in Kentucky," explaining his desire to "be ahead of the enemy in occupying Columbus and Paducah." Buckner was in Richmond, proposing to the Confederate authorities certain military movements in Kentucky, "in advance of the action of her Governor." On September 3d they promised him, as definitely as they could, countenance and assistance in his scheme; and soon after he accepted a brigadier-general's commission from Jefferson Davis. Before his return to the West, General Polk had initiated the rebel invasion of Kentucky. Whether upon information from Governor Magoffin or elsewhere, Polk ordered General Gideon J. Pillow with his detachment of six thousand men, which the abandoned Missouri campaign left idle, to cross the river from New Madrid, and occupy the town of Columbus.

Polk to Magoffin, Sept. 1, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 179.

Cooper to Harris, Polk, and Zollicoffer, Sept. 3, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 400.

Polk to Harris, Sept. 4, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 180.

The Confederate movement created a flurry in neutrality circles. Numerous protests went both to Polk and the Richmond authorities, and Governor Harris hastened to assure Governor Magoffin

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that he was in entire ignorance of it, and had appealed to Jefferson Davis to order the troops withdrawn. Even the rebel Secretary of War was mystified by the report, and directed Polk to order the troops withdrawn from Kentucky. Jefferson Davis, however, either with prior knowledge, or with a truer instinct, telegraphed to Polk: "The necessity justifies the action." In his letter to Davis, General Polk strongly argued the propriety of his course. "I believe, if we could have found a respectable pretext, it would have been better to have seized this place some months ago, as I am convinced we had more friends then in Kentucky than we have had since, and every hour's delay made against us. Kentucky was fast melting away under the influence of the Lincoln Government." He had little need to urge this view. Jefferson Davis wrote him: "We cannot permit the indeterminate quantities, the political elements, to control our action in cases of military necessity"; and to Governor Harris, "Security to Tennessee and other parts of the Confederacy is the primary object. To this all else must give way." Further to strengthen and consolidate the important military enterprises thus begun, Jefferson Davis now adopted a recommendation of Polk, that "they should be combined from West to East across the Mississippi Valley, and placed under the direction of one head, and that head should have large discretionary powers. Such a position is one of very great responsibility, involving and requiring large experience and extensive military knowledge, and I know of no one so well equal to that task as our friend General Albert S. Johnston." Johnston, with

Harris to Davis, Sept. 4, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., pp. 188, 189.

Walker to Polk, Sept. 4, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 180.

Davis to Polk, Sept. 4, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 181.

Polk to Davis, Sept. 14, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 191.

Davis to Polk, Sept. 15, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 188.

Davis to Harris, Sept. 13, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 190.

Polk to Davis, Aug. 29, 1861. W. R. Vol. III., p. 688.

the rank of general, was duly assigned on September 10 to the command of Department No. Two, covering in general the States of Tennessee, Arkansas, part of Mississippi, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, and the Indian Territory. Proceeding at once to Nashville, and conferring with the local authorities, Johnston wrote back to Richmond under date of September 16th: "So far from yielding to the demand for the withdrawal of our troops, I have determined to occupy Bowling Green at once. . . I design to-morrow (which is the earliest practicable moment) to take possession of Bowling Green with five thousand troops, and prepare to support the movement with such force as circumstances may indicate and the means at my command may allow." The movement was promptly carried out. Buckner was put in command of the expedition, and, seizing several railroad trains, he moved forward to Bowling Green on the morning of the 18th, having sent ahead five hundred men to occupy Munfordville, and issuing the usual proclamation that his invasion was a measure of defense. Meanwhile the third column of invaders entered Eastern Kentucky through Cumberland Gap. Brigadier-General Zollicoffer had eight or ten thousand men under his command in Eastern Tennessee, but much scattered and badly armed and supplied. By his active supervision he somewhat improved the organization of his forces, and acquainted himself with the intricate topography of the mountain region he was in during the month of August. Prompted probably from Kentucky, he was ready early in September to join in the combined movement into

Special Orders, Sept. 10, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 405.

Johnston to Davis, Sept. 16, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., pp. 193, 194.

Buckner to Cooper, Sept. 18, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., pp. 413, 414.

CHAP. III. that State. About the 10th he advanced through Cumberland Gap with six regiments to Cumberland Ford, and began planning further aggressive movements against the small Union force, principally Home Guards, which had been collected and organized at Camp Dick Robinson.

The strong Union Legislature which Kentucky elected in August met in Frankfort, the capital, on the 2d of September. Polk, having securely established himself at Columbus, notified the Governor of his presence, and offered as his only excuse the alleged intention of the Federal troops to occupy it. The Legislature, not deeming the excuse sufficient, passed a joint resolution instructing the Governor "to inform those concerned that Kentucky expects the Confederate or Tennessee troops to be withdrawn from her soil unconditionally." The Governor vetoed the resolution on the ground that it did not also embrace the Union troops, but the Legislature passed it over his veto. Governor Magoffin now issued his proclamation as directed. Polk and Jefferson Davis replied that the Confederate army would withdraw if the Union army would do the same. To this the Legislature responded with another joint resolution, that the conditions prescribed were an insult to the dignity of the State, "to which Kentucky cannot listen without dishonor," and "that the invaders must be expelled." The resolution further required General Robert Anderson to take instant command, with authority to call out a volunteer force, in all of which the Governor was required to lend his aid. Kentucky was thus officially taken out of her false attitude of neutrality, and placed

W. R. Vol. IV., p. 288.

Sept. 13, 1861. Ibid., p. 287.

Sept. 20, 1861. Ibid., p. 288.

in active coöperation with the Federal Government to maintain the Union. Every day increased the strength and zeal of her assistance. A little later in the session a law was enacted, declaring enlistments under the Confederate flag a misdemeanor, and the invasion of Kentucky by Confederate soldiers a felony, and prescribing heavy penalties for both. Finally, the Legislature authorized the enlistment of forty thousand volunteers to "repel invasion," providing also that they should be mustered into the service of the United States and coöperate with the armies of the Union. This was a complete revolution from the anti-coercion resolutions the previous Legislature had passed in January.

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"Session Laws," pp. 13–17.

Hitherto, there were no Federal forces in Kentucky except the brigade which Lieutenant Nelson had organized at Camp Dick Robinson; the Home Guards in various counties, though supplied with arms by the Federal Government, were acting under State militia laws. General Anderson, commanding the military department which embraced Kentucky, still kept his headquarters at Cincinnati, and Lovell H. Rousseau, a prominent Kentuckian, engaged in organizing a brigade of Kentuckians, had purposely made his camp on the Indiana side of the Ohio River. Nevertheless, President Lincoln, the Governors of Ohio and Indiana, and the various military commanders, had for months been ready to go to the assistance of the Kentucky Unionists whenever the necessity should arise. Even if the neutral attitude of Kentucky had not been brought to an end by the advance of the Confederate forces, it would have

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been by that of the Federals. A point had been reached where further inaction was impossible. Three days before General Pillow occupied Hickman, Frémont sent General Grant to Southeastern Missouri to concentrate the several Federal detachments, drive out the enemy, and destroy a rumored rebel battery at Belmont. His order says finally: "It is intended, in connection with all these movements, to occupy Columbus, Kentucky, as soon as possible." It was in executing a part of this order that the gunboats sent to Belmont extended their reconnaissance down the river and discovered the advance of the Confederates on the Kentucky shore. An unexpected delay in the movement of one of Grant's detachments occurred at the same time; and that commander, with military intuition, postponed the continuance of the local operations in Missouri, and instead prepared an expedition into Kentucky, which became the initial step of his brilliant and fruitful campaign in that direction a few months later. He saw that Columbus, his primary objective point, was lost for the present; but he also perceived that another, of perhaps equal strategical value, yet lay within his grasp, though, clearly, there was no time to be wasted in seizing it. The gunboat reconnaissance on the Mississippi River which revealed the rebel occupation of Kentucky was begun on September 4th. On the following day General Grant, having telegraphed the information to Frémont and to the Kentucky Legislature, hurriedly organized an expedition of two gunboats, eighteen hundred men, sixteen cannon for batteries, and a supply of provisions and ammunition on transports. Taking personal com-

Frémont to Grant, Aug. 28, 1861. W. R. Vol. III., p. 142.

Rodgers to Frémont, Sept. 4, 1861. W. R. Vol. III., p. 152.

GENERAL WILLIAM NELSON.

mand, he started with the expedition from Cairo, at midnight of the 5th, and proceeded up the Ohio River to the town of Paducah, at the mouth of the Tennessee, where he arrived on the morning of the 6th. A contraband trade with the rebels, by means of small steamboats plying on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, had called special attention to the easy communication between this point and Central Tennessee. He landed without opposition and took possession, making arrangements to fortify and permanently hold the place; having done which he returned to Cairo the same afternoon to report his advance and forward reënforcements. The importance of the seizure was appreciated by the rebels, for on the 13th of September Buckner wrote to Richmond: "Our possession of Columbus is already neutralized by that of Paducah."

Buckner to Cooper, Sept. 13, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 189.

The culmination of affairs in Kentucky had been carefully watched by the authorities in Washington. From a conference with President Lincoln, Anderson returned on September 1st to Cincinnati taking with him two subordinates of exceptional ability, Brigadier-Generals W. T. Sherman and George H. Thomas, both destined to great usefulness and fame. A delegation of prominent Kentuckians met him to set forth the critical condition of their State. He dispatched Sherman to solicit help from Frémont and the Governors of Indiana and Illinois, and a week later moved his headquarters to Louisville, also sending Thomas to Camp Dick Robinson to take direction of affairs in that quarter. By the time Sherman returned from his mission the crisis had developed itself.

CHAP. III. The appearance of Polk's forces at Columbus, the action of the Legislature, the occupation of Paducah by Grant, and the threatening rumors from Buckner's camp created a high degree of excitement and apprehension. On the 16th of September Anderson reported Zollicoffer's invasion through Cumberland Gap, upon which the President telegraphed him to assume active command in Kentucky at once. Added to this, there came to Louisville on the 18th the positive news of Buckner's advance to Bowling Green. This information set all Central Kentucky in a military ferment; for the widely published announcement that the State Guards, Buckner's secession militia, would meet at Lexington, on September 20, to have a camp drill under supervision of Breckinridge, Humphrey Marshall, and other leaders, seemed too plainly coincident with the triple invasion to be designed for a mere holiday. A rising at Lexington and a junction with Zollicoffer might end in a march upon Frankfort, the capital, to disperse the Legislature; a simultaneous advance by Buckner in force, and the capture of Louisville would, in a brief campaign, complete the subjugation of Kentucky to the rebellion. There remains no record to show whether or not such a plan was among the movements "in advance of the Governor's action," which Buckner discussed with Jefferson Davis on September 3, at Richmond. The bare possibility roused the Unionists of Kentucky to vigorous action. With an evident distrust of Governor Magoffin a caucus of the Union members of the Legislature assumed quasi executive authority, and, through the presiding officers of the

two Houses, requested General Thomas, at Camp Dick Robinson, to send a regiment, "fully prepared for a fight," to Lexington in advance of the advertised "camp drill" of the State Guards, also promising that the Home Guards should rally in force to support it. Thomas ordered the movement, and, in spite of numerous obstacles, Colonel Thomas E. Bramlette brought his regiment to the Lexington Fair Ground on the night of the 19th of September. His advent was so sudden that he came near making important arrests. John C. Breckinridge, Humphrey Marshall, and other leaders were present, but being warned fled in different directions, and the "camp drill," shorn of its guiding spirits, proved powerless for the mischievous ends which had evidently been intended.

W. R. Vol. IV., p. 262.

At Louisville General Anderson lost no time in an effort to meet Buckner's advance. There were no organized troops in the city, but the brigade Rousseau had been collecting on the Indiana shore was hastily called across the river, and joined to the Louisville Home Guards, making in all some two thousand five hundred men, who were sent out by the railroad towards Nashville, under the personal command of Sherman. An expedition of the enemy had burned the important railroad bridges, apparently, however, with the simple object of creating delay. Nevertheless, Sherman went on and occupied Muldraugh's Hill, where he was soon reënforced; for the utmost efforts had been used by the Governors of Ohio and Indiana to send to the help of Kentucky every available regiment. If Buckner meditated the capture of Louisville, this show of force caused him to pause;

CHAP. III. but he remained firm at Bowling Green, increasing his army, and ready to take part in whatever movement events might render feasible.

No serious or decisive conflicts immediately followed these various moves on the military chessboard; they served merely to define the hostile frontier. With Polk at Columbus, Buckner at Bowling Green, and Zollicoffer in front of Cumberland Gap, the Confederate frontier was practically along the northern Tennessee line. The Union line ran irregularly through the center of Kentucky. One direct result was rapidly to eliminate the armed secessionists. Humphrey Marshall, Breckinridge, and others, who had set up rebel camps, hastened with their followers within the protection of the Confederate line. Before further operations occurred, a change of Union commanders took place. The excitement, labors, and responsibilities proved too great for the physical strength of General Anderson. Relieved at his own request, on October 8, he relinquished the command to General Sherman, who was designated by General Scott to succeed him. The new and heavy duties which fell upon him were by no means to Sherman's liking. "I am forced into the command of this department against my will," he wrote. Looking at his field with a purely professional eye, the disproportion between the magnitude of his task and the immediate means for its accomplishment oppressed him like a nightmare. There were no troops in Kentucky when he came. The recruits sent from other States were gradually growing into an army, but as yet without drill, equipment, or organization. Kentucky itself was in a curious

Gen. Scott to Anderson, Oct. 6, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 296.

Sherman, Orders, Oct. 8, 1861. Ibid., p. 297.

Sherman to Garrett Davis, Oct. 8, 1861. Ibid.

transition. By vote of her people and her Legislature she had decided to adhere to the Union; but, as a practical incident of war, many of her energetic and adventurous young men drifted to Southern camps, while the Union property-holders and heads of families were unfit or unwilling immediately to enlist in active service to sustain the cause they had espoused. The Home Guards, called into service for ten days, generally refused to extend their term. The arms furnished them became scattered, and if not seized or stolen by young secession recruits and carried to the enemy, were with difficulty recovered for use. Now that the General Government had assumed command, and the State had ordered an army, many neighborhoods felt privileged to call for protection, rather than furnish a quota for offense; and even where they were ready to serve, the enlistment of the State volunteers, recently authorized by the Legislature, had yet scarcely begun. CHAP. III.

About the middle of October Mr. Cameron, Secretary of War, returning from a visit to Frémont, passed through Louisville and held a military consultation with Sherman. "I remember taking a large map of the United States," writes Sherman, "and assuming the people of the whole South to be in rebellion, that our task was to subdue them, showed that McClellan was on the left, having a frontage of less than 100 miles, and Frémont on the right about the same; whereas I, the center, had from the Big Sandy to Paducah, over 300 miles of frontier; that McClellan had 100,000 men, Frémont 60,000, whereas to me had only been allotted about 18,000. I argued that for the pur-

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pose of defense we should have 60,000 men at once, and for offense would need 200,000 before we were done. Mr. Cameron, who still lay on the bed, threw up his hands and exclaimed: 'Great God! where are they to come from?' I asserted that there were plenty of men at the North ready and willing to come if he would only accept their services; for it was notorious that regiments had been formed in all the Northwestern States, whose services had been refused by the War Department, on the ground that they would not be needed. We discussed all these matters fully, in the most friendly spirit, and I thought I had aroused Mr. Cameron to a realization of the great war that was before us, and was, in fact, upon us." While recognizing many of the needs which Sherman pointed out, the Secretary could not immediately promise him any great augmentation of his force. Complaints and requests of this character were constantly coming to the Administration from all the commanders and governors, and a letter of President Lincoln, written in reply to a similar strain of fault-finding from Governor Morton of Indiana, plainly indicates why such requirements in all quarters could not be immediately supplied:

William T. Sherman, "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 203.

> Your letter by the hand of Mr. Prunk was received yesterday. I write this letter because I wish you to believe of us (as we certainly believe of you) that we are doing the very best we can. You do not receive arms from us as fast as you need them; but it is because we have not near enough to meet all the pressing demands, and we are obliged to share around what we have, sending the larger share to the points which appear to need them most. We have great hope that our own supply will be ample before long, so that you and all others can have as

many as you need. I see an article in an Indianapolis newspaper denouncing me for not answering your letter sent by a special messenger two or three weeks ago. I did make what I thought the best answer I could to that letter. As I remember, it asked for ten heavy guns to be distributed, with some troops, at Lawrenceburgh, Madison, New Albany, and Evansville; and I ordered the guns and directed you to send the troops, if you had them. As to Kentucky, you do not estimate that State as more important than I do, but I am compelled to watch all points. While I write this I am, if not in *range* at least in *hearing* of cannon-shot from an army of enemies more than 100,000 strong. I do not expect them to capture this city; but I know they would if I were to send the men and arms from here to defend Louisville, of which there is not a single hostile armed soldier within forty miles, nor any force known to be moving upon it from any distance. It is true the army in our front may make a half-circle around southward and move on Louisville, but when they do we will make a half-circle around northward and meet them; and in the mean time we will get up what forces we can from other sources to also meet them.

I hope Zollicoffer has left Cumberland Gap (though I fear he has not) because, if he has, I rather infer he did it because of his dread of Camp Dick Robinson, reënforced from Cincinnati, moving on him, than because of his intention to move on Louisville. But if he does go round and reënforce Buckner, let Dick Robinson come round and reënforce Sherman, and the thing is substantially as it was when Zollicoffer left Cumberland Gap. I state this as an illustration; for, in fact, I think if the Gap is left open to us Dick Robinson should take it and hold it; while Indiana and the vicinity of Louisville in Kentucky can reënforce Sherman faster than Zollicoffer can Buckner. .

Lincoln to Morton, Sept. 29, 1861. MS.

The conjectures of the President proved substantially correct. Moreover, great as was the need of arms for Union regiments, the scarcity among the rebels was much greater. Of the 30,000 stands

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which Johnston asked for when he assumed command, the rebel War Department could only send him 1000; ammunition and supplies were equally wanting; he called out 50,000 volunteers from Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas, but reënforcements from this and other sources were slow. His greatest immediate help came by transferring Major-General William J. Hardee with his division from Missouri to Bowling Green. If, as Sherman surmised, a concentration of his detachments would have enabled him to make a successful march on Louisville, he was unwilling to take the risk. The contingency upon which the rebel invasion was probably based, the expected rising in Kentucky, had completely failed. "We have received but little accession," he wrote to Richmond, "to our ranks since the Confederate forces crossed the line; in fact, no such enthusiastic demonstration as to justify any movements not warranted by our ability to maintain our own communications." "The Kentuckians still come in small squads," wrote one of his recruiting brigadiers; "I have induced the most of them to go in for the war. This requires about three speeches a day. When thus stirred up, they go almost to a man. Since I have found that I can't be a general, I have turned recruiting agent and sensation speaker for the brief period that I shall remain." For the present Johnston's policy was purely defensive; he directed Cumberland Gap to be fortified, and completed the works at Columbus, "to meet the probable flotilla from the North, supposed to carry two hundred heavy guns"; while Buckner was vigorously admonished to "hold on to Bowling Green." He made this

Johnston to Benjamin, Oct. 22, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 469.

Alcorn to Buckner, Oct. 21, 1861. Ibid., p. 467.

Johnston to Cooper, Oct. 4, 1861. Ibid., p. 436.

Mackall to Buckner, Oct. 4, 1861. Ibid., p. 437.

order when Buckner had six thousand men; but even when that number was doubled, after the arrival of Hardee, Johnston was occupied with calculations for defense, and was asking for further reënforcements. CHAP. III.

Johnston to Cooper, Oct. 17, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 455.

CHAPTER IV

EAST TENNESSEE

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THE loyalty of Andrew Johnson and his energetic defense of the Union in the Senate of the United States called public attention with peculiar force to Eastern Tennessee. Nominally, the whole State was in rebellion; really, nearly one-third of its people, occupying about one-third of its territory, remained firm in their attachment to the Government. By repeated public conventions, by a solemn appeal to the Legislature, and an overwhelming popular vote, the region known as East Tennessee protested against the usurpation and military domination which made them, against their will, aliens and enemies to the Constitution and flag they revered. At an election held on the 8th day of June, 1861, at which the people were asked to ratify the military league with the Southern Confederacy and the Provisional Constitution of the Confederate States, twenty-nine counties of Eastern Tennessee cast only 14,780 votes for separation and 32,923 votes against separation. Still further, when the rebel Governor ordered an election, on the first Thursday in August, for delegates to the rebel congress (that being the day fixed by the State constitution and laws for electing Representatives to the Congress of the United States), the

Goodspeed, "History of Tennessee," pp. 532–534.

Union electors in the second and fourth districts cast their ballots for Horace Maynard and Andrew J. Clements in such numbers (estimated at 10,000 votes in the second and at 2000 votes in the fourth) that they were admitted to seats as Representatives in the Thirty-seventh Congress.

D. W. Bartlett, "Contested Elections in Congress," pp. 367, 368.

The people of East Tennessee, finding no redress in petition or ballot, gave signs of a determination to liberate themselves by force of arms. Upon unmistakable evidence of their loyalty, the Lincoln Government made efforts to render them all possible assistance. A considerable supply of arms and ammunition was sent to Lieutenant William Nelson in Kentucky to be forwarded to the Unionists in East Tennessee, and another navy lieutenant, S. P. Carter, was commissioned specially to organize Union regiments of Tennesseeans willing to enlist; this, however, was a work of no little trouble and danger. Transportation was extremely difficult over the long mountain route without a railroad. The rebel authorities were constantly watchful of this weak point in their offensive and defensive plans. From the first, Governor Harris treated East Tennessee as a hostile and conquered country, and his successive letters to Jefferson Davis form a continuous call for additional military force to hold that region in subjection.[1] The

Harris to Walker, August 16, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 389.

[1] "Twelve or fourteen thousand men in East Tennessee would crush out rebellion there without firing a gun, while a smaller force may involve us in scenes of blood that will take long years to heal. We can temporize with the rebellious spirit of that people no longer. If you can order a sufficient number of troops from States south of us to that point, the adoption of a decided and energetic policy (which I am resolved upon so soon as I have a sufficient force to sustain it), the arrest and indictment for treason of the ringleaders, will give perfect peace and quiet to that division of our State in the course of two months."

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rebel General Zollicoffer's earliest duty had been to overawe the Union sentiment of East Tennessee and protect the important railroad line connecting distant parts of the Confederacy, the possession of which was indispensable to its military operations. Despite his vigilance, Union arms and ammunition were smuggled in and secret combinations begun. Between rigorous military repression on one side and chronic Union uprising on the other, a desperate condition of affairs grew up, still further embittered by the gradual development of a malignant persecution of bolder Unionists in the civil tribunals of the State—an evil of which Jefferson Davis himself felt obliged to take notice.[1]

All summer long President Lincoln heard with sympathy, from Andrew Johnson and others, the reports of the patriotism and sufferings of their people. It will be remembered that in the memorandum made by him after Bull Run, he suggested a military movement from Cincinnati on East Tennessee. Since the culmination of affairs in Ken-

[1] Robertson Topp writing to Robert Josselyn under date of October 26, 1861, says:

"More than one hundred persons have been arrested in East Tennessee, without warrants in some cases, marched great distances, and carried into court on no other charge than that they were Union men. . .

"I have spent much time this summer and fall in trying to conciliate the people of East Tennessee. I thought I had succeeded. Just as the people were quieting down, getting reconciled, raising volunteers, etc., they commenced these arrests, which have gone far to poison the minds of the people against the Government, and if tolerated and persisted in, the people of that end of the State at a critical moment will rise up enemies instead of friends. You ask me who makes these arrests. As far as I can learn they are instigated by a few malicious, troublesome men in and about Knoxville. . ."

[Indorsement.]

"Referred to the Secretary of War, that such inquiry may be made and action taken as will prevent, as far as we may, such proceedings as are herein described. J. D."

W. R. Vol. IV., p. 477.

tucky, with the prospect of early active operations, such a project had acquired a new importance. Late in September he went to the War Department and made the following memorandum, which, though not in the form of an express order, was nevertheless intended as a substantial direction of military affairs: CHAP. IV. 1861.

On or about the 5th of October (the exact day to be determined hereafter) I wish a movement made to seize and hold a point on the railroad connecting Virginia and Tennessee, near the mountain pass called Cumberland Gap. That point is now guarded against us by Zollicoffer, with six or eight thousand rebels, at Barboursville, Kentucky, say twenty-five miles from the Gap towards Lexington. We have a force of five or six thousand, under General Thomas, at Camp Dick Robinson, about twenty-five miles from Lexington and seventy-five from Zollicoffer's camp, on the road between the two. There is not a railroad anywhere between Lexington and the point to be seized, and along the whole length of which the Union sentiment among the people largely predominates. We have military possession of the railroad from Cincinnati to Lexington and from Louisville to Lexington, and some Home Guards, under General Crittenden, are on the latter line. We have possession of the railroad from Louisville to Nashville, Tennessee, so far as Muldraugh's Hill, about forty miles, and the rebels have possession of that road all south of there. At the Hill we have a force of eight thousand, under General Sherman, and about an equal force of rebels is a very short distance south, under General Buckner.

We have a large force at Paducah, and a smaller at Fort Holt, both on the Kentucky side, with some at Bird's Point, Cairo, Mound City, Evansville, and New Albany, all on the other side; and all which, with the gunboats on the river, are perhaps sufficient to guard the Ohio from Louisville to its mouth.

About supplies of troops my general idea is, that all from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and

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Kansas not now elsewhere, be left to Frémont. All from Indiana and Michigan, not now elsewhere, be sent to Anderson at Louisville. All from Ohio needed in Western Virginia be sent there, and any remainder be sent to Mitchel, at Cincinnati, for Anderson. All east of the mountains be appropriated to McClellan and to the coast.

As to movements my idea is, that the one for the coast and that on Cumberland Gap be simultaneous, and that in the mean time preparation, vigilant watching, and the defensive only be acted upon, this, however, not to apply to Frémont's operations in Northern and Middle Missouri. That before these movements Thomas and Sherman shall respectively watch but not attack Zollicoffer and Buckner. That when the coast and Gap movements shall be ready Sherman is merely to stand fast, while all at Cincinnati and all at Louisville, with all on the line, concentrate rapidly at Lexington, and thence to Thomas's camp, joining him, and the whole thence upon the Gap. It is for the military men to decide whether they can find a pass through the mountains at or near the Gap which cannot be defended by the enemy with a greatly inferior force, and what is to be done in regard to this.

The coast and Gap movements made, Generals McClellan and Frémont, in their respective departments, will avail themselves of any advantages the diversions may present.

W. R. Series III., Vol. I., pp. 465, 466.

Notwithstanding President Lincoln's earnest interest in this project, and the almost express order above quoted, one obstacle after another arose to prevent its being carried out. The special attention of General Thomas was also upon it. A brigade of East Tennesseeans was being enlisted at Camp Dick Robinson, who came there because they could not with safety be organized in their own homes, under the eyes of Zollicoffer. From them, and more especially from Lieutenant Carter, Thomas obtained such current information as made him

anxious to lead an expedition through Cumberland Gap. He several times recommended the movement; asking General Anderson (October 4) for four good regiments, with transportation and ammunition, and adding: "I believe if I could get such a force here, and be ready to march in ten days from this time, that I could seize on the railroad at Knoxville and cut off all communication between Memphis and Virginia." The Washington authorities meanwhile, probably uninformed of General Thomas's spirit and confidence, designated General O. M. Mitchel for the duty. This apparent slight touched General Thomas's pride, and he asked to be relieved. Sherman, however, interfered, informing him that Mitchel was subject to his command, and intimating that he (Thomas) would not be robbed of his opportunity. While the Secretary of War was visiting Sherman, as already mentioned, he also urged upon the general his personal desire "that the Cumberland Ford and Gap should be seized, and the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad taken possession of, and the artery that supplied the rebellion cut." We have seen that Sherman was in no mood for the enterprise; that on the contrary he wanted large reënforcements for defense. And though Thomas once more (November 5) earnestly suggested that with four more good regiments "we could seize the railroad yet"; and again, "With my headquarters at Somerset I can easily seize the most favorable time for invading East Tennessee, which ought to be done this winter," Sherman expressed his belief that they would have enough to do in Kentucky, and directed Thomas simply to hold

Thomas to Anderson, Oct. 4, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 294.

Thomas to Mitchel, Oct. 11, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 303.

Sherman to Thomas, Oct. 13, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 306.

Thomas to Cameron, Oct. 21, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 314.

Thomas to Sherman, Nov. 5, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., pp. 338, 339.

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Sherman to Thomas, Nov. 5, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 336.

Sherman, "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 209.

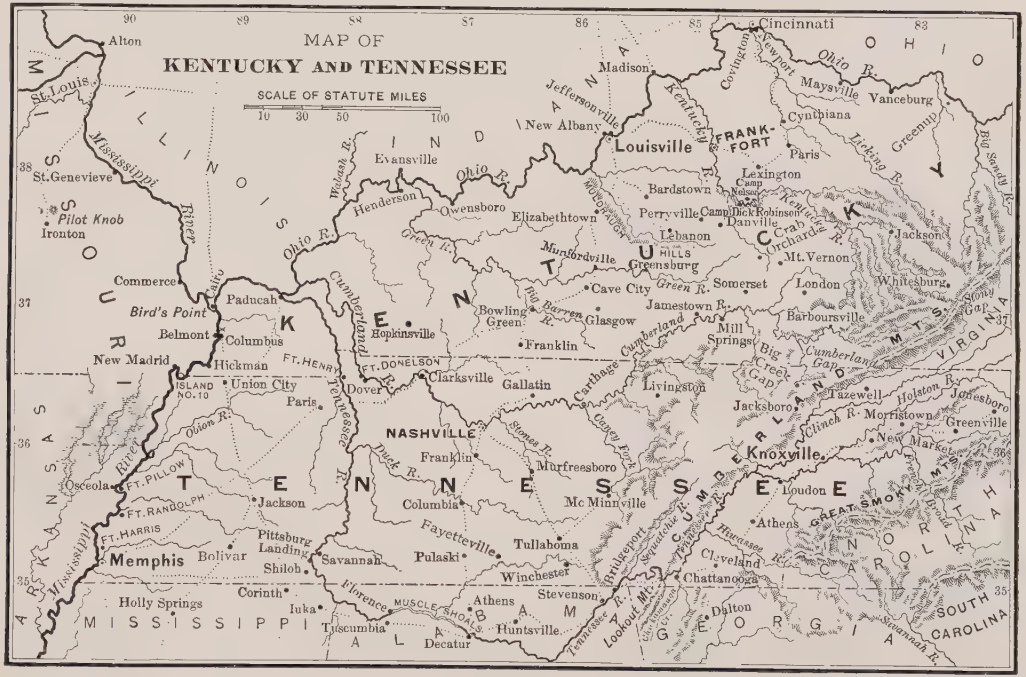
Sherman to Thomas, Nov. 6, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 341.

Zollicoffer in check and await events. Indeed, from this time forward, Sherman grew more and more apprehensive, till at length he could scarcely endure his great responsibility. "Our forces too small to do good and too large to sacrifice," he reported on November 3. "The future looks dark as possible," he again wrote to Washington November 6th; "it would be better if some more sanguine mind were here, for I am forced to order according to my convictions."

Sherman, "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 204.

Sherman has himself recorded that a certain degree of public clamor had arisen about his military administration in Kentucky, and particularly that he was charged in unfriendly newspapers with being insane; when, therefore, he was soon after relieved from command, he attributed it to this cause. This belief was altogether incorrect. The fact that he had asked to be relieved, and had no faith in his own ability to perform the service required with the means furnished, sufficiently accounts for the change. But there exists in addition positive evidence that the President was in no wise influenced by the newspaper slander. Upon a letter from Mr. Guthrie,[1] indicating that the Union

[1] "I find many of the Union men of the State are anxious that General Sherman should remain and lead our advance. They do not see the difficulty as it presents itself to me. I suppose that although General Sherman has been superseded at his own request that it was all the more readily done because the line of policy for the army assembled in Kentucky pressed from Washington was different from that his judgment dictated, and because his policy of a line of assault and defense required more troops than could be spared without interfering with other plans adopted or cherished by the Commander-in-Chief and higher councils at Washington. In my judgment there is but one way for the Government to have the services of General Sherman in Kentucky, and that is to make General Buell a major-general and request General Sherman to report to him.


MAP OF
KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE
SCALE OF STATUTE MILES
10 30 50 100
Alton
St. Louis
St. Genevieve
Pilot Knob
Ironton
Commerce
Bird's Point
Belmont
Columbus
New Madrid
Hickman
ISLAND NO. 10
Union City
Paris
Paducah
Hopkinsville
Evansville
Henderson
Owensboro
Elizabethtown
Madison
Jeffersonville
New Albany
Louisville
Cincinnati
Covington
Newport
Maysville
Vanceburg
Cynthiana
Paris
Lexington
Camp Nelson
Bardstown
Perryville
Camp Dick Robinson
Danville
Lebanon
Greensburg
Mt. Vernon
Somerset
London
Whitesburg
Jackson
Barbourville
Mill Springs
Cave City
Bowling Green
Glasgow
Franklin
Jamestown
Big Creek Gap
Cumberland Gap
Tazewell
Jonesboro
Greenville
Morristown
New Market
Knoxville
Loudon
Jacksboro
Clarksville
Gallatin
Carthage
Livingston
Dover
Fort Henry
Fort Donelson
NASHVILLE
Franklin
Murfreesboro
Columbia
McMinnville
Fayetteville
Tullahoma
Winchester
Stevenson
Athens
Chattanooga
Cleveland
Dalton
Huntsville
Decatur
Florence
Tuscumbia
Iuka
Corinth
Holly Springs
Memphis
Fort Pillow
Fort Randolph
Fort Harris
Osceola
Jackson
Pittsburg Landing
Shiloh
Bolivar
Savannah
Pulaski
Lookout Mt.
Missouri
Illinois
Indiana
Ohio
Kentucky
Tennessee
Mississippi
Arkansas
Alabama
Georgia
North Carolina
South Carolina
Virginia
Ohio R.
Mississippi River
Cumberland R.
Tennessee R.
Green R.
Barren R.
Kentucky R.
Licking R.
Big Sandy R.
Guyandotte R.
Kanawha R.
Big Sandy R.
Clinch R.
Holston R.
Broad R.
Hiwassee R.
Ocoee R.
Duck R.
Stones R.
Obion R.
Hatchie R.
Tennessee R.
Muscle Shoals
Tennessee R.
Chickamauga Creek
Chickamauga Battlefield
Great Smoky Mts.
Cumberland Mts.
Cumberland Plateau
Savannah R.
Big Creek
Crab Orchard
Stony Gap
Pound Gap
Jackson
Mt. Vernon
Whitesburg
Barbourville
Jacksboro
Tazewell
Morristown
Greenville
New Market
Knoxville
Loudon
Athens
Cleveland
Chattanooga
Dalton
Stevenson
Winchester
Tullahoma
Fayetteville
Pulaski
Columbia
McMinnville
Murfreesboro
Franklin
NASHVILLE
Gallatin
Carthage
Livingston
Clarksville
Dover
Fort Henry
Fort Donelson
Hopkinsville
Bowling Green
Glasgow
Franklin
Cave City
Somerset
London
Mill Springs
Jamestown
Big Creek Gap
Cumberland Gap
Tazewell
Jonesboro
Greenville
Morristown
New Market
Knoxville
Loudon
Jacksboro

men of Kentucky were unwilling to lose General Sherman's presence and services, but that a question of rank stood in the way, Mr. Lincoln made the endorsement: "If General McClellan thinks it proper to make Buell a major-general, enabling Sherman to return to Kentucky, it would rather please me." CHAP. IV.

Lincoln, "Endorsement," Nov. 27, 1861. MS.

The retirement of General Scott on the first of November, and the elevation of McClellan to the command of general-in-chief, brought with it, as usual, many changes in minor commands. Brigadier-General D. C. Buell, previously chosen by General Anderson for service in Kentucky, was McClellan's intimate friend; and the new General-in-Chief probably needed no special inducement to give so important a duty to a favorite, who was in addition an accomplished soldier. His qualities as a commander were yet to be developed; like McClellan himself, up to the outbreak of the war, he had obtained but little rank. The Department of the Ohio was formed on November 9, and General Buell assigned to its command. One good quality — confidence — he manifested at the outset. "Sherman," he wrote, "still insists that I require two hundred thousand men. I am quite content to try with a good many less." In an interview with McClellan, before Buell went to Kentucky, the two friends had fully discussed their respective duties

1861.

Buell to McClellan, Nov. 22, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 444.

"The Administration is just as much bound to respect and guard the honor of the General and officers and soldiers, as they are to restore the Union and enforce the laws.

"I would not like to see General Sherman ordered to report to General Buell while he ranks General Buell, but would greatly rejoice to know that he was directed to report to Major-General Buell, and so would most if not all the Union men of the State and most of the officers in the field, as I am told."

Guthrie to Speed, Nov. 22, 1861. MS.

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and hopes. McClellan immediately began sending him reënforcements, and in his first written instruction made the East Tennessee movement a prime object. This injunction he repeated and emphasized from time to time: "I am still convinced that political and strategical considerations render a prompt movement in force on Eastern Tennessee imperative. The object to be gained is to cut the communication between the Mississippi Valley and Eastern Virginia; to protect our Union friends in Tennessee, and reëstablish the Government of the Union in the eastern portion of that State." "I think we owe it to our Union friends in Eastern Tennessee to protect them at all hazards. First secure that; then, if you possess the means, carry Nashville." "If you gain and retain possession of Eastern Tennessee you will have won brighter laurels than any I hope to gain." "I tell the East Tennessee men here to rest quiet; that you will take care of them, and will never desert them."

McClellan to Buell, Nov. 25, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 447.

Ibid., Nov. 29, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 457.

Ibid., Dec. 3, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 468.

Ibid., Feb. 5, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 473, 583.

As soon as Congress met, President Lincoln made another effort to forward the expedition which he had so much at heart. His study of the subject with military men showed him that the problem of transportation was the main difficulty the East Tennessee campaign would have to encounter. To obviate this he proposed to Congress the construction of a military railroad to Cumberland Gap or Knoxville. "I deem it of importance," said his annual message, "that the loyal regions of East Tennessee and Western North Carolina should be connected with Kentucky and other faithful parts of the Union by railroad. I therefore recommend, as a military measure, that Congress provide for

the construction of such road as speedily as possible. Kentucky, no doubt, will coöperate, and, through her Legislature, make the most judicious selection of a line. The northern terminus must connect with some existing railroad; and whether the route shall be from Lexington or Nicholasville to the Cumberland Gap; or from Lebanon to the Tennessee line in the direction of Knoxville; or on some still different line, can easily be determined. Kentucky and the General Government coöperating, the work can be completed in a very short time; and when done, it will be not only of vast present usefulness, but also a valuable permanent improvement worth its cost in all the future." In addition he went personally before a Senate Committee to explain and urge the project; the subject was referred to a select committee, and a bill was reported and passed to a second reading; but as the committee and the Senate were still in that flush of early sanguine enthusiasm which expected the rebellion to be crushed by a single vigorous campaign, and especially as the army made no advance against Cumberland Gap, but moved almost its entire strength in a different direction, the subject was neglected and dropped, amid the hurry of more pressing legislation.

Appendix, "Globe," Dec. 3, 1861, p. 1.

It would seem that the general direction of central authority could scarcely be made stronger without descending to such details as must, in war, always be left to the determination of local conditions, and to that judgment which an officer founds upon his personal observation. Apparently General Buell accepted the instruction which had been given him; but McClellan quickly discovered

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that the reënforcements sent were not being placed with reference to East Tennessee. "What is the reason," he inquired by telegraph, "for concentration of troops at Louisville? I urge movement at once on Eastern Tennessee unless it is impossible." Here Buell ought to have sent a straightforward reply, either that it was impossible, or that he would obey; instead of this he answered evasively, suggesting several alternative plans, but giving no indications of a willingness to act; his chief solicitude was reënforcement, drill, organization. These were certainly useful, perhaps necessary. But when they interfered with the prosecution of an enterprise specifically directed by his superior, he should not have left his intentions unexplained. Ten days more ran on, and Andrew Johnson and Horace Maynard, who were in Washington attending Congress, sent Buell an anxious dispatch: "Our people are oppressed and pursued as beasts of the forest; the Government must come to their relief." His reply kept the word of promise to the ear: "I assure you I recognize no more imperative duty, and crave no higher honor, than that of rescuing our loyal friends in Tennessee, whose sufferings and heroism I think I can appreciate." But his letter to McClellan of the same day, if they could have seen it, would have sadly chilled their hope: "I do not mean to be diverted more than is absolutely necessary from what I regard as of the first importance — the organization of my forces, now little better than a mob." In his letter of two days later, by way of making amends, he said he had organized a division at Lebanon with special reference to East Tennessee, but hinted that he

McClellan to Buell, Nov. 27, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 450.

Maynard and Johnson to Buell, Dec. 7, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 480.

Buell to Maynard and Johnson, Dec. 8, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 483.

Buell to McClellan, Dec. 8, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 483.

would convince McClellan it could be used to better advantage elsewhere.

To leave him no excuse the War Department telegraphed him, December 20: "Do you need more regiments than are now under your orders; if so, how many?" His reply indicated that he realized he was trying the patience of the Government: "I am not willing to say that I need more regiments. I can use more with decided advantage, if they can be sent." His more formal answer acknowledged that he had an aggregate "of some 70,000 men, about 57,000 for duty," and his letter at length discloses the idea upon which he had been acting: "The plan which I propose for the troops here is one of defense on the east and of invasion on the south." Finally, the approach of the New Year, together with other circumstances, again brought the question, so long evaded and neglected, sharply to his attention. "Johnson, Maynard, etc., are again becoming frantic," McClellan telegraphed him on December 29th, "and have President Lincoln's sympathy excited. Political considerations would make it advisable to get the arms and troops into Eastern Tennessee at a very early day; you are, however, the best judge. Can you tell me about when and in what force you will be in Eastern Tennessee?" Whether he intended it or not, he once more sent an evasive and misleading response: "It startles me to think," he wrote on December 29, "how much time has elapsed since my arrival, and to find myself still in Louisville. . . I have this moment received your dispatch. I intend a column of 12,000 men, with three batteries, for East Tennessee; but, as I have

Buell to McClellan, Dec. 10, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 487.

Thomas to Buell, Dec. 20, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 509.

Buell to Thomas, Dec. 21, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 509.

Ibid., Dec. 23, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 511, 512.

McClellan to Buell, Dec. 29, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 926.

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telegraphed you, it is impossible to fix a time for it to be there, so much depends on the circumstances which may arise in the mean time. . . In any event I must tell you, what I have been unwilling to do all along, that you will require more troops in Kentucky. Don't acknowledge this, however, but act on it."

Buell to McClellan, Dec. 29, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 520, 521.

This last qualified promise did not long serve to postpone the decisive avowal that Buell had been hitherto allowing the Administration to entertain delusive hopes. Prompted by causes which are related elsewhere, President Lincoln, on the 4th of January, telegraphed him the definite question: "Have arms gone forward for East Tennessee? Please tell me the progress and condition of the movement in that direction. Answer." In his reply, Buell for the first time, after nearly two months of evasion, fully let out the secret that his plans lay in another quarter. "While my preparations have had this movement constantly in view, I will confess to your Excellency that I have been bound to it more by my sympathy for the people of East Tennessee and the anxiety with which you and the General-in-Chief have desired it than by my opinion of its wisdom as an unconditional measure. As earnestly as I wish to accomplish it, my judgment has from the first been decidedly against it, if it should render at all doubtful the success of a movement against the great power of the rebellion in the West, which is mainly arrayed on the line from Columbus to Bowling Green, and can speedily be concentrated at any point of that line which is attacked singly." President Lincoln's comment on this extraordinary avowal is in that

Lincoln to Buell, Jan. 4, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 530.

Buell to Lincoln, Jan. 5, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 530, 531.

generous and forbearing tone which forms one of his characteristic traits; but it does not conceal his sadness that the cause is to lose an advantage which a resolute commander might have grasped: CHAP. IV.

Your dispatch of yesterday has been received, and it disappoints and distresses me. I have shown it to General McClellan, who says he will write you to-day. I am not competent to criticize your views, and therefore what I offer is in justification of myself. Of the two, I would rather have a point on the railroad south of Cumberland Gap than Nashville. First, because it cuts a great artery of the enemy's communication, which Nashville does not; and secondly, because it is in the midst of loyal people, who would rally around it, while Nashville is not. Again, I cannot see why the movement on East Tennessee would not be a diversion in your favor, rather than a disadvantage, assuming that a movement towards Nashville is the main object. But my distress is that our friends in East Tennessee are being hanged and driven to despair, and even now, I fear, are thinking of taking rebel arms for the sake of personal protection. In this we lose the most valuable stake we have in the South. My dispatch, to which yours is an answer, was sent with the knowledge of Senator Johnson and Representative Maynard of East Tennessee, and they will be upon me to know the answer, which I cannot safely show them. They would despair, possibly resign to go and save their families somehow, or die with them. I do not intend this to be an order in any sense, but merely, as intimated before, to show you the grounds of my anxiety.

Lincoln to Buell, Jan. 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 927, 928.

McClellan did not let Buell off so easily. A sensitive officer would have little relished to be told that he had not only caused himself to be misunderstood, but had deranged the plans of his superior. "I was extremely sorry," wrote McClellan the same day, "to learn from your telegram to the President that you had from the beginning attached

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little or no importance to a movement in East Tennessee. I had not so understood your views, and it develops a radical difference between your views and my own, which I deeply regret. My own general plans for the prosecution of the war make the speedy occupation of East Tennessee and its lines of railway matters of absolute necessity. Bowling Green and Nashville are in that connection of very secondary importance at the present moment. My own advance cannot, according to my present views, be made until your troops are solidly established in the Eastern portion of Tennessee. If that is not possible a complete and prejudicial change in my own plans at once becomes necessary. Interesting as Nashville may be to the Louisville interests, it strikes me that its possession is of very secondary importance in comparison with the immense results that would arise from the adherence to our cause of the masses in East Tennessee, West North Carolina, South Carolina, North Georgia, and Alabama; results that I feel assured would ere long flow from the movement I allude to."

McClellan to Buell, Jan. 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 531.

This candid lecture was within a week supplemented by another letter from the General-in-Chief to Buell containing a suggestion so strong as almost to amount to a positive order. "You have no idea of the pressure brought to bear here upon the Government for a forward movement. It is so strong that it seems absolutely necessary to make the advance on Eastern Tennessee at once. I incline to this, as a first step, for many reasons. Your possession of the railroad there will surely prevent the main army in my front from being reënforced

and may force Johnston to detach. Its political effect will be very great." In his answer, written the same day, Buell at length promised to carry out the instruction. "As I told you in my dispatch, I shall now devote myself to it, contenting myself, as far as Bowling Green is concerned, with holding it in check and concealing my design as long as possible." But though he, in the same letter, acknowledged that the numerical strength of his command had risen to ninety thousand men, he could not bring himself to act even in fulfillment of his own definite promise. Nearly three weeks later, he wrote a letter alleging that "the want of transportation and the condition of the roads" had thwarted the programme. To a long argument in support of this opinion, he added: "For the reasons I have stated I have been forced reluctantly to the conviction that an advance into East Tennessee is impracticable at this time on any scale which will be sufficient." The real reason of his conviction appears in a few sentences which follow, and which show a final decision to carry out his long cherished design of a movement in force against Bowling Green.

CHAP. IV. McClellan to Buell, Jan. 13, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 547.

Buell to McClellan, Jan. 13, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 548.

Ibid., Feb. 1, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 931, 932.

If there be a question among military experts as to the momentary feasibility or local value of this East Tennessee movement, there can be none when considered in its influence and relation to the whole great theater of war. A glance at the map, and a study of attendant circumstances, can leave no doubt that it was entirely possible to have seized and held the mountain region of Eastern Tennessee, and that such an occupation would have been a severance of the rebel Confederacy, almost as

CHAP. IV. complete and damaging to its military strength as the opening of the Mississippi. If, also, there had been any doubt about the earnestness of the Union sentiment of the people of Eastern Tennessee, events soon developed ample proofs of their patriotism and devotion to the Government. The reader will remember the transmittal of arms and ammunition by Nelson and Carter, and the formation of secret military organizations by the bolder Unionists. Rumors and promises of the coming of a Union army also reached them from time to time in such form as to excite their hope and measurably inspire their reliance. Had General Thomas been permitted to march his column to Cumberland Gap and Knoxville, as he desired, about the first of November, his presence would have been favored by extraordinary events.

1861.

Startling news reached the rebel Secretary of War on the 9th of November. "Two large bridges," telegraphed a railroad president, "on my road were burned last night about twelve o'clock; also one bridge on the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad at the same time, and an effort made to burn the largest bridge on my road. There is great excitement along the whole line of road and evidence that the Union party are organizing and preparing to destroy or take possession of the whole line from Bristol to Chattanooga." Two days later the commanding officer at Knoxville wrote further details. "My fears, expressed to you by letters and dispatches of the 4th and 5th instants, have been realized by the destruction of no less than five railroad bridges: two on the East Tennessee and Virginia road, one on the East Tennessee and

Branner to Benjamin, Nov. 9, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 231.

Georgia road, and two on the Western and Atlantic road. The indications were apparent to me, but I was powerless to avert it. The whole country is now in a state of rebellion; a thousand men are within six miles of Strawberry Plains Bridge, and an attack is contemplated to-morrow. . . An attack was made on Watauga yesterday. Our men succeeded in beating them off, but they are gathering in larger force and may renew it in a day or two. They are not yet fully organized, and have no subsistence to enable them to hold out long. . . I learn from two gentlemen, just arrived, that another camp is being formed about ten miles from here in Sevier County, and already three hundred are in camp. They are being reënforced from Blount, Roane, Johnson, Green, Carter, and other counties. I need not say that great alarm is felt by the few Southern men." "Civil war has broken out at length in East Tennessee," said another letter; "in the late election scarcely a so-called Union man voted. . . They look confidently for the reëstablishment of the Federal authority in the South with as much confidence as the Jews look for the coming of the Messiah, and I feel quite sure when I assert it that no event or circumstance can change or modify their hopes. In this state of affairs this part, and, indeed, all of East Tennessee, will be subjected during the war to apprehensions of internal revolt, more or less remote, as the tide of war turns in this direction. The recent bridge-burning in this section was occasioned by the hope that the Federal troops would be here in a few days from Kentucky to second their efforts. . . There are now camped in and about Elizabethtown, in

Wood to Cooper, Nov. 11, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., pp. 236, 237.

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Carter County, some 1200 or 1500 men, armed with a motley assortment of guns, in open defiance of the Confederate States of America, and who are awaiting a movement of the Federal troops from Kentucky to march forward and take possession of the railroad. These men are gathered up from three or five counties in this region, and comprise the hostile Union element of this section, and never will be appeased, conciliated, or quieted in a Southern Confederacy."

Graham to Jefferson Davis, Nov. 12, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 239.

To these appeals from persons of local prominence, Governor Harris of Tennessee added his earnest entreaty. "The burning of railroad bridges in East Tennessee shows a deep-seated spirit of rebellion in that section. Union men are organizing. This rebellion must be crushed out instantly, the leaders arrested and summarily punished." The Richmond authorities were not slow to respond. Two regiments from Memphis and another from Pensacola were ordered to East Tennessee in all haste, with such miscellaneous companies and fragments as could be gathered up nearer the scene of disturbance. "Troops are now moving to East Tennessee to crush the traitors," telegraphed the rebel Secretary of War; "you shall be amply protected." There is little need to relate the quick and unsparing movements by the Confederate troops against the Union combinations. The uprising seems to have been ill-advised and ill-concerted. Unsupported as it was by Federal forces, the hasty gatherings of the loyalists were quickly dispersed, and many of the participants captured.[1]

Harris to Jefferson Davis, Nov. 12, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 240.

Benjamin to Branner, Nov. 13, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 243.

[1] The following extract from a letter written by a Confederate, "at the instance of a number of leading citizens, together with

The course of the Richmond Government towards the East Tennessee "traitors," however, deserves to be remembered. In the eyes of Jefferson Davis "treason" to the Union was a holy duty, while "treason" to their usurpation was deserving of exemplary punishment, which in this instance was ordered with apparent relish. "I am very glad," telegraphed the Confederate Secretary of War, "to hear of the action of the military authorities, and hope to hear they have hung every bridge-burner at the end of the burned bridge."

Benjamin to Ramsay, Nov. 25, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 700, 701.

many officers of the army," to induce the Confederate Government to relax the extreme rigor of its East Tennessee policy, may probably be accepted as fair evidence of the transaction it describes:

"Colonels Leadbetter and Vance moved their commands into that portion of the State bordering on the Virginia and Kentucky line, while General Carroll and Colonel Wood moved from the west in the direction of Chattanooga and Knoxville. Scouting parties were sent out in every direction, who arrested hundreds suspected of disloyalty, and incarcerated them in prison, until almost every jail in the eastern end of the State was filled with poor, ignorant, and, for the most part, harmless men, who had been guilty of no crime, save that of lending a too-credulous ear to the corrupt demagogues whose counsels have led them astray. Among those thus captured were a number of bridge-burners. These latter were tried and promptly executed. The rigorous measures adopted by the military commanders here struck still greater terror into those who had before been Union men, and to avoid arrest and, as they thought, subsequent punishment, concealed themselves, thus giving the semblance of guilt to actions innocent in fact and entirely natural under the circumstances which surrounded them. About 400 of the poor victims of designing leaders have been sent to Tuscaloosa as prisoners of war, leaving in many instances their families in a helpless and destitute condition. The greatest distress prevails throughout the entire country in consequence of the various arrests that have been made, together with the facts that the horses and the other property of the parties that have been arrested have been seized by the soldiers, and in many cases appropriated to personal uses or wantonly destroyed. Old political animosities and private grudges have been revived, and bad men among our friends are availing themselves of the opportunity afforded them by bringing Southern men to hunt down with the ferocity of bloodhounds all those against whom they entertain any feeling of dislike."

Young to Currin, Dec. 19, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 777, 778.

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To the officer in charge of the prisoners he gave specific instructions: "1st. All such as can be identified as having been engaged in bridge-burning are to be tried summarily by drumhead court martial, and if found guilty executed on the spot by hanging. It would be well to leave their bodies hanging in the vicinity of the burned bridges. 2d. All such as have not been so engaged are to be treated as prisoners of war, and sent with an armed guard to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, there to be kept imprisoned at the depot selected by the Government for prisoners of war. . . P. S.— Judge Patterson, Colonel Pickens, and other ringleaders of the same class, must be sent at once to Tuscaloosa to jail as prisoners of war."[1]

Benjamin to Wood, Nov. 25, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 701.

Under these stimulating orders, which were distinctly approved by Jefferson Davis,[2] the military

[1] These instructions were repeated by Benjamin to Major-General G. B. Crittenden, Dec. 13, 1861:

"If by chance you shall, however, be thrown into command in any part of East Tennessee, you will understand the policy of the Government to be to show no further clemency to rebels in arms. All actually engaged in bridge-burning should be tried summarily, and executed, if convicted, by military authority. All others captured with arms or proven to have taken up arms against the Government are to be sent to Tuscaloosa as prisoners of war. All such inhabitants as are known to have been in league with the traitors may be pardoned if they promptly deliver up their arms and take the oath of allegiance to this Government. In such event they are to be protected in their persons and property; otherwise they should be arrested wherever found and treated as prisoners of war, and especially should care be taken to allow none of them to remain armed. These are the instructions substantially that have been given to Colonel Leadbetter, under which he has been acting."

W. R. Vol. VII., p. 764.

[2] "RICHMOND, Dec. 10, 1861.

"GENERAL W. H. CARROLL, Knoxville: Execute the sentence of your court martial on the bridge-burners. The law does not require any approval by the President, but he entirely approves my order to hang every bridge-burner you can catch and convict.

"J. P. BENJAMIN,
"Secretary of War."

W. R. Vol. VII., p. 754.

commanders executed their task with a zeal which seems to have outrun all discretion. A veritable reign of terror ensued. Several bridge-burners were hung with impressive publicity, the jails were filled with accused persons, and car-loads of the more notable "suspects" were shipped to the military prison at Tuscaloosa. When the civil laws and judicial process were invoked to ward off in some measure this wholesale proscription, the commanding officer placed the city of Knoxville under martial law, "until such time as all the prisoners charged with military offenses now in my custody can be tried by a military tribunal." Persecution so ran riot that one of the subordinate Confederate officers at last felt obliged to protest against it: "I have just been appointed commandant of this post [Knoxville] and have already discovered numberless abuses that should be corrected. Marauding bands of armed men go through the country, representing themselves to be the authorized agents of the State or Confederate Government; they 'impress' into 'service' horses and men; they plunder the helpless, and especially the *quondam* supporters of Johnson, Maynard, and Brownlow; they force men to enlist by the representation that otherwise they will be incarcerated at Tuscaloosa; they force the people to feed and care for themselves and horses without compensation. I would gladly have instructions as to the mode of correcting these abuses — and the character of punishment to be inflicted upon those guilty of such offenses." A feeble response of moderation came from Richmond: "In relation to the abuses mentioned the Secretary expects you to be vigilant and energetic in suppressing them,"

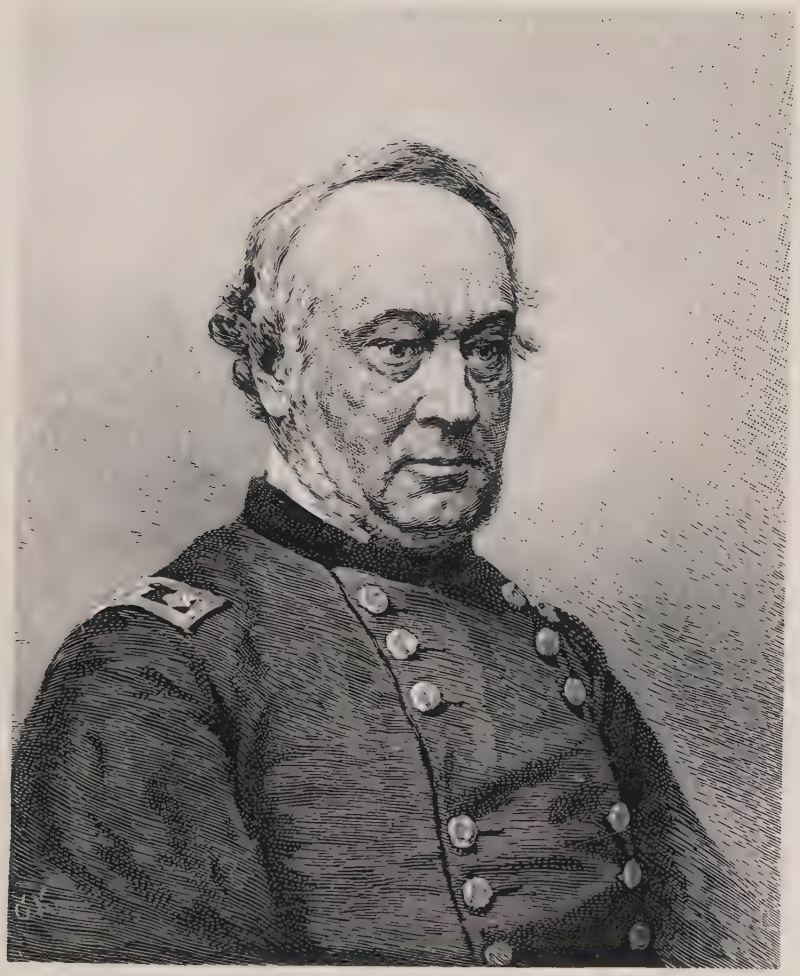
Carroll to Benjamin, Dec. 11, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 760.

Monsarrat to Benjamin, Dec. 29, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 803, 804.

CHAP. IV. Bledsoe to Monsarrat, Jan. 3, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 819.

but the officer was further directed to look for particular instructions to another of his superiors, whose severity was also notorious.

In the case of the most conspicuous of the Union "ringleaders," the Confederate Government narrowly escaped the odium of what would have been a signal injustice and breach of faith, which its over-zealous partisans were eager to perpetrate. Local rebel vindictiveness centered itself against the editor of the "Knoxville Whig," the well-known "Parson" William G. Brownlow, who had opposed and denounced secession and rebellion in his journal and elsewhere in bitter and unstinted language. When the uprising took place he was naturally suspected of having been its chief instigator; and though he disavowed all knowledge of the bridge-burning, and publicly opposed and condemned local insurrection, his enemies adhered to their belief in his guilt, and on numerous occasions threatened him with personal violence. He appealed for protection to one of the Confederate commanders, and promised to leave the country if he could have safeguard in his exit. Upon assurance that this would be done he surrendered himself to the military authorities, but was immediately arrested for treason on a civil writ. It must be recorded to the credit of Secretary Benjamin that he resisted the importunate clamors for Brownlow's trial and punishment, and kept the honor of the Confederate Government by finally ordering him to be conveyed under military protection within the Union lines.



GENERAL HENRY W. HALLECK.

CHAPTER V

HALLECK

IN sending General Hunter to relieve Frémont the President did not intend that he should remain in charge of the Department of the West. Out of its vast extent the Department of Kansas was created a few days afterward, embracing the State of Kansas, the Indian Territory west of Arkansas, and the Territories of Nebraska, Colorado, and Dakota, with headquarters at Fort Leavenworth, and Hunter was transferred to its command. General Halleck was assigned to the Department of the Missouri, embracing the States of Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Arkansas, and that portion of Kentucky west of the Cumberland River, to become the more permanent successor of Frémont. By this division the Government had a special object in view, namely, to organize a column which should march southward along the Western frontier, and by such a march bring about several results, each of them important in itself and of cumulative influence upon the general plan of Western operations then in contemplation. It would protect the State of Kansas. It would serve to hold or repossess the Indian Territory. It would, by a comparatively short route, reach and

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W. R. Vol. III., p. 567.

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It was known that such an enterprise would encounter serious obstacles. The Confederate Government had, among its earliest movements, reached out boldly to secure the Indian Territory. Under shelter of the Arkansas insurrection General Albert Pike, with flatteries and promises, secured a nominal adhesion of the principal Indian chiefs to the Confederacy. It was, perhaps, not unknown to him that, with the usual fickleness of savage policy, some of them were making equally ardent and equally untrustworthy protestations on the other side. On the whole, the rebellion had the better prospect of retaining their support, since for the moment it was in practical possession of the Indian Territory, with four regiments of Indians organized as the nucleus of a Confederate army. This, however, was the highest stage of its success. No strong Confederate forces made their appearance; no Confederate battles were won; the promised annuities did not arrive from the Confederate Treasury; and the faith and coöperation of the Indians began to wane. As elsewhere in the South, loyalty to the Union was not wholly extinguished. A loyal Creek chief, Hopoeithleyohola, raised the banner of revolt against secession, gathered something over two thousand adherents, and fought several battles during the months of No-

vember and December, 1861. It required all the available Indian forces in Confederate pay to suppress and hold in check this armed demonstration in favor of the flag which, for half a century, had brought to the red men the voice of friendship and stated instalments of money and goods to redeem the promise of old and solemn treaties. CHAP. V.

In addition to the danger in its intended pathway the proposed expedition encountered fatal obstacles in its very organization. Among the earliest calls for troops President Lincoln had given Senator James H. Lane authority to raise a brigade in Kansas. The regiments composing it contained much of that free and reckless fighting material of the frontier, which had been educated by the Missouri border ruffians to guerrilla methods. The necessity of defending the Kansas border against secession bushwhackers from Missouri kept these regiments at home and continued their predatory habits; and in their rapid forays they often failed to discriminate between friend and foe. Halleck, the new commander of the Department of the West, several times had occasion to complain of their mischief. He protested against Lane's appointment as brigadier-general. He not only disavowed the lawlessness committed by Lane's men, but issued orders to drive them from his department; or, if caught, to disarm them and hold them prisoners. "They are no better," he wrote, "than a band of robbers; they cross the line, rob, steal, plunder, and burn whatever they can lay their hands upon. They disgrace the name and uniform of American soldiers and are driving good Union men into the ranks of the secession

Halleck to McClellan, Dec. 19, 1861, with Lincoln Endorsement, Dec. 27, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 449, 450.

Halleck to Thomas, Jan. 18, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 507.

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army." President Lincoln saw that a substratum of personal prejudice lay under this somewhat harsh condemnation, which extended not merely to Lane's soldiers, but to the entire separate Texas expedition as well. Halleck complained of "movements having been governed by political expediency, and in many cases directed by politicians in order to subserve particular interests." Lane was, indeed, chargeable with a selfish ambition in this proposed movement, and soon endeavored even to supplant Hunter.

Halleck to McClellan, Jan. 20, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 509.

Lincoln, recognizing Lane's great energy and influence in Kansas, had intended to make it tributary to the Union cause, but he had no idea of giving him the superior direction or management. His letters show with what prudence, but also with what firmness, he interfered to regulate this distant personal entanglement. "It is my wish," he wrote, January 31, 1862, "that the expedition commonly called the 'Lane Expedition' shall be, as much as has been promised at the Adjutant-General's office, under the supervision of General McClellan, and not any more. I have not intended, and do not now intend, that it shall be a great, exhausting affair, but a snug, sober column of 10,000 or 15,000. General Lane has been told by me many times that he is under the command of General Hunter, and assented to it as often as told. It was the distinct agreement between him and me, when I appointed him, that he was to be under Hunter." All Lane's efforts to set aside Hunter proved fruitless. Under date of February 10, 1862, Lincoln repeated his decision: "My wish has been and is to avail the Government of the services of both General Hunter

Lincoln to Secretary of War, Jan. 31, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 538.

and General Lane, and, so far as possible, to personally oblige both. General Hunter is the senior officer, and must command when they serve together; though, in so far as he can, consistently with the public service and his own honor, oblige General Lane he will also oblige me. If they cannot come to an amicable understanding, General Lane must report to General Hunter for duty, according to the rules, or decline the service." Naturally after this Lane lost his interest in the expedition, of which he had caused himself to be proclaimed the real leader and hero. Halleck's decided aversion to the whole scheme already rendered it practically useless, and other causes soon assisted to divert the forces gathered for the purpose to different destinations. It came officially to an end when, on March 11, 1862, Hunter's department was once more consolidated with Halleck's.

Lincoln to Hunter and Lane, Feb. 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 551.

Henry Wager Halleck was born in Westernville, Oneida County, New York, January 15, 1815. He was educated at Union College, and entered the military academy at West Point, where he was graduated third in a class of thirty-one, and was made second lieutenant of engineers July 1, 1839. While yet a cadet he was employed at the academy as assistant professor of engineering. From the first he devoted himself with constant industry to the more serious studies of his profession. He had attained a first lieutenancy when the Mexican war broke out, and was sent to the Pacific coast. A variety of valuable services in the military and naval operations prosecuted there secured him the brevet of captain from May 1, 1847. On the conquest of California by the United States forces, he

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took part in the political organization of the new State, first as Secretary of State under the military Governors, and afterwards as leading member of the Convention which framed the Constitution under which California was admitted to the Union. He remained in the army and in charge of various engineering duties on the Pacific coast until August 1, 1854, having been meanwhile promoted captain of engineers. At that date he resigned his commission to engage in civil pursuits. He became a member of a law firm, and was also interested in mines and railroads, when the outbreak of the Rebellion called him again into the military service of the Government. He had become not only practically accomplished in his profession as a soldier, but also distinguished as a writer on military art and science. Halleck's high qualifications were well understood and appreciated by General Scott, at whose suggestion he was appointed major-general in the regular army, to date from August 19, 1861, with orders to report himself at army headquarters in Washington. A phrase in one of Scott's letters, setting forth McClellan's disregard for his authority, creates an inference that the old general intended that Halleck should succeed him in chief command. But when the latter reached Washington, the confusion and disasters in the Department of the West were at their culmination, and urgent necessity required him to be sent thither to succeed Frémont.

Halleck, Order, Nov. 19, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 369.

General Halleck arrived at St. Louis on November 18, 1861, and assumed command on the 19th. His written instructions stated forcibly the reforms he was expected to bring about, and his earliest

reports indicate that his difficulties had not been overstated — irregularities in contracts; great confusion in organization; everywhere a want of arms and supplies; absence of routine and discipline. Added to this was reported danger from the enemy. "I am satisfied," he telegraphed under date of November 29, "that the enemy is operating in and against this State with a much larger force than was supposed when I left Washington, and also that a general insurrection is organizing in the counties near the Missouri River, between Boonville and Saint Joseph. A desperate effort will be made to supply and winter their troops in this State, so as to spare their own resources for a summer campaign." An invasion was indeed in contemplation, but rumor had magnified its available strength. General Price had, since the battle of Lexington, lingered in Southwestern Missouri, and was once more preparing for a northward march. His method of campaigning was peculiar, and needed only the minimum of organization and preparation. His troops were made up mainly of young, reckless, hardy Missourians, to whom a campaign was an adventure of pastime and excitement, and who brought, each man, his own horse, gun, and indispensable equipments and clothing. The usual burdens of an army commissariat and transportation were of little moment to these partisans, who started up as if by magic from every farm and thicket, and gathered their supplies wherever they went. To quote the language of one of the Missouri rebel leaders: "Our forces, to combat or cut them off, would require only a haversack to where the enemy would require a wagon." The

Halleck to McClellan, Nov. 29, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 392.

Thompson to Borland, Nov. 24, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 691, 692.

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evil of the system was, that such forces vanished quite as rapidly as they assembled. The enthusiastic squads with which Price had won his victory at Lexington were scattered among their homes and haunts. The first step of a campaign, therefore, involved the gathering of a new army, and this proved not so easy in the opening storms of winter as it had in the fine midsummer weather.

On the 26th of November, 1861, Price issued a call for fifty thousand men. The language of his proclamation, however, breathed more of despair than confidence. He reminded his adherents that only one in forty had answered to the former call, and that "Boys and small property-holders have in the main fought the battles for the protection of your property." He repeated many times, with emphasis: "I must have fifty thousand men." His prospects were far from encouraging. McCulloch, in a mood of stubborn disagreement, was withdrawing his army to Arkansas, where he went into winter quarters. Later on, when Price formally requested his coöperation, McCulloch as formally refused. For the moment the Confederate cause in Southwestern Missouri was languishing. Ex-Governor Jackson made a show of keeping it alive by calling the fugitive remnant of his rebel Legislature together at Neosho, and with the help of his sole official relic — the purloined State Seal — enacting the well-worn farce of passing a secession ordinance, and making a military league with the Confederate States.

Price, Proclamation, Nov. 26, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII. pp. 695, 696.

The Confederate Congress at Richmond responded to the farce with an act to admit Missouri to the Confederacy. An act, of more promise

at least, appropriating a million dollars to aid the Confederate cause in that State, had been passed in the preceding August. Such small instalment of this fund, however, as was transmitted, failed even to pay the soldiers who, for their long service, had not as yet "received a dime." In return, the Richmond authorities asked the transfer of Missouri troops to the Confederate service; but with this request the rebel Missouri leaders were unable immediately to comply. When, under date of December 30, 1861, ex-Governor Jackson complained of neglect and once more urged that Price be made commander in Missouri, Jefferson Davis responded sarcastically that not a regiment had been tendered, and that he could not appoint a general before he had troops for him. From all these causes Price's projected winter campaign failed, and he attributed the failure to McCulloch's refusal to help him.

Price to Polk, Dec. 23, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 730. Davis to Jackson, Dec. 21, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 717.

Jackson to Davis, Dec. 30, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 724, 725.

Davis to Jackson, Jan. 8, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 734.

Price to Polk, Dec. 23, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 729, 730.

The second branch of the rebel programme in Missouri, that of raising an insurrection north of the Missouri River, proved more effective. Halleck was scarcely in command when the stir and agitation of depredations and burning of bridges, by small squads of secessionists in disguise, was reported from various counties of Northern Missouri. Federal detachments went in pursuit, and the perpetrators as usual disappeared, only, however, to break out with fresh outrages when quiet and safety had apparently been restored. It was soon evident that this was not merely a manifestation of neighborhood disloyalty, but that it was part of a deliberate system instigated by the principal rebel leaders. "Do you intend to regard men,"

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wrote Price to Halleck, January 12, 1862, "whom I have specially dispatched to destroy roads, burn bridges, tear up culverts, etc., as amenable to an enemy's court martial, or will you have them to be tried as usual, by the proper authorities, according to the statutes of the State?" Halleck, who had placed the State under martial law to enable him to deal more effectually with this class of offenders, stated his authority and his determination, with distinct emphasis, in his reply of January 22, 1862:

W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 497.

> You must be aware, general, that no orders of yours can save from punishment spies, marauders, robbers, incendiaries, guerrilla bands, etc., who violate the laws of war. You cannot give immunity to crime. But let us fully understand each other on this point. If you send armed forces, wearing the garb of soldiers and duly organized and enrolled as legitimate belligerents, to destroy railroads, bridges, etc., as a military act, we shall kill them, if possible, in open warfare, or, if we capture them, we shall treat them as prisoners of war. But it is well understood that you have sent numbers of your adherents, in the garb of peaceful citizens and under false pretenses, through our lines into Northern Missouri, to rob and destroy the property of Union men and to burn and destroy railroad bridges, thus endangering the lives of thousands, and this, too, without any military necessity or possible military advantage. Moreover, peaceful citizens of Missouri, quietly working on their farms, have been instigated by your emissaries to take up arms as insurgents, and to rob and plunder and to commit arson and murder. They do not even act under the garb of soldiers, but under false pretenses and in the guise of peaceful citizens. You certainly will not pretend that men guilty of such crimes, although specially "appointed and instructed by you," are entitled to the rights and immunities of ordinary prisoners of war.

Halleck to Price, Jan. 22, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 515.

One important effect which Price hoped to produce by the guerrilla rising he was instigating was

to fill his army with recruits. "The most populous and truest counties of the State," he wrote, "lie upon or north of the Missouri River. . . I sent a detachment of 1100 men to Lexington, which after remaining only a part of one day gathered together about 2500 recruits, and escorted them in safety to me at Osceola." His statement was partly correct, but other causes contributed both to this partial success and the partial defeat which immediately followed. Just at the time this expedition went to Lexington, the various Federal detachments north of the Missouri River were engaged in driving a number of secession guerrilla bands southward across that stream. Halleck was directing the combined movements of the Union troops, and had stationed detachments of Pope's forces south of the Missouri River with the design of intercepting and capturing the fugitive bands. The failure of some of the reports to reach him disconcerted and partly frustrated his design. The earlier guerrilla parties which crossed at and near Lexington escaped and made their way to Price, but the later ones were intercepted and captured as Halleck had planned. "Colonel Davis came upon the enemy near Milford late this afternoon," reported Pope, December 19, "and, having driven in his pickets, assaulted him in force. A brisk skirmish ensued, when the enemy, finding himself surrounded and cut off, surrendered at discretion. One thousand three hundred prisoners, including three colonels and seventeen captains, 1000 stands of arms, 1000 horses, 65 wagons, tents, baggage, and supplies have fallen into our hands. Our loss is two killed and eight wounded." On the next day he found his capture was still

Price to Polk, Dec. 23, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 729, 730.

Pope to Halleck, Dec. 19, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 447.

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Pope to Halleck, Dec. 20, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 452.

larger, and he telegraphed from Sedalia, "Just arrived here. Troops much embarrassed with nearly 2000 prisoners and great quantity of captured property."

In anticipation of the capture or dispersion of these Northwestern detachments of rebels, Halleck had directed the collection of an army at and about Rolla with a view to move in force against Price. On December 25, Brigadier-General Samuel R. Curtis was assigned to the command of the Union troops to operate in the Southwestern District of Missouri. Some ten thousand men were gathered to form his column, and the possibility of a short and successful campaign was before him had he known Price's actual condition. But the situation was one of difficulty. The railroad ended at Rolla; Springfield, the supposed location of Price's camp, was a hundred and twenty miles further to the Southwest, by bad roads through a mountainous country. Rebel sympathy was strong throughout the whole region, and the favoring surroundings enabled Price to conceal his designs and magnify his numbers. Rumors came that he intended to fight at Springfield, and the estimates of his strength varied from 20,000 to 40,000.

Halleck, Orders, Dec. 25, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 462.

Curtis to Kelton, Jan. 5, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 489.

The greatest obstacle to pursuit was the severity of the winter weather; nevertheless, the Union soldiers bore their privations with admirable patience and fortitude, and Halleck urged a continuance of the movement through every hindrance and discouragement. "I have ordered General Curtis to move forward," he wrote to McClellan, January 14th, "with all his infantry and artillery. His force will not be less than 12,000. The enemy

is reported to have between thirty-five and forty guns. General Curtis has only twenty-four, but I send him six pieces to-morrow, and will send six more in a few days. I also propose placing a strong reserve at Rolla, which can be sent forward if necessary. The weather is intensely cold, and the troops, supplied as they are with very inferior clothing, blankets, and tents, must suffer greatly in a winter campaign, and yet I see no way of avoiding it. Unless Price is driven from the State insurrections will continually occur in all the central and northern counties, so as to prevent the withdrawal of our troops." A few days later (January 18, 1862), Halleck wrote to Curtis that he was about to reënforce him with an entire division from Pope's army, increasing his strength to fifteen thousand; that he would send him mittens for his soldiers; "get as many hand-mills as you can for grinding corn. . . Take the bull by the horns. I will back you in such forced requisitions when they become necessary for supplying the forces. We must have no failure in this movement against Price. It must be the last." And once more, on January 27, he repeated his urgent admonition: "There is a strong pressure on us for troops, and all that are not absolutely necessary here must go elsewhere. Pope's command is entirely broken up; 4000 in Davis's reserve and 6000 ordered to Cairo. Push on as rapidly as possible, and end the matter with Price."

Halleck to McClellan, Jan. 14, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 504.

Halleck to Curtis, Jan. 18, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 506.

Ibid., Jan. 27, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 528.

This trying winter campaign, led by General Curtis, though successful in the end, did not terminate so quickly as General Halleck had hoped. Leaving the heroic Western soldiers camping and

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W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 370.

This language brought upon him the indignant protest of the combined antislavery sentiment of

the North. He was berated in newspapers and denounced in Congress, and the violence of public condemnation threatened seriously to impair his military usefulness. He had indeed gone too far. The country felt, and the army knew, that so far from being generally true that negroes carried valuable information to the enemy, the very reverse was the rule, and that the "contrabands" in reality constituted one of the most important and trustworthy sources of knowledge to Union commanders—a medium of communication which, later in the war, came to be jocosely designated the "grape-vine telegraph." Halleck soon found himself put on the defensive, and wrote an explanatory letter which was printed in the newspapers. A little later he took occasion to define officially his intention: "The object of these orders is to prevent any person in the army from acting in the capacity of negro-catcher or negro-stealer. The relation between the slave and his master, or pretended master, is not a matter to be determined by military officers, except in the single case provided for by Congress. This matter in all other cases must be decided by the civil authorities. One object in keeping fugitive slaves out of our camp is to keep clear of all such questions. . . Orders No. 3 do not apply to the authorized private servants of officers nor the negroes employed by proper authority in the camps. It applies only to fugitive slaves. The prohibition to admit them within our lines does not prevent the exercise of all proper offices of humanity, in giving them food and clothing outside, where such offices are necessary to prevent suffering."

Halleck to Blair, Dec. 8, 1861. H. J. Raymond, "Life of Lincoln," p. 330.

Halleck to Asboth, Dec. 26, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 465.

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It will be remembered that the Missouri State Convention in the month of July appointed and inaugurated a provisional State government. This action was merely designed to supply a temporary executive authority until the people could elect new loyal State officers, which election was ordered to be held on the first Monday in November. The Convention also, when it finished the work of its summer session, adjourned to meet on the third Monday in December, 1861, but political and military affairs remained in so unsettled a condition during the whole autumn that anything like effective popular action was impracticable. The Convention was therefore called together in a third session at an earlier date (October 11, 1861), when it wisely adopted an ordinance postponing the State election for the period of one year, and for continuing the officers of the provisional government until their successors should be duly appointed. With his tenure of power thus prolonged, Governor Gamble, also by direction of the Convention, proposed to the President to raise a special force of Missouri State militia for service within the State during the war there, but to act with the United States troops in military operations within the State or when necessary to its defense.

Convention Journal, July, 1861, p. 30.

Ibid., p. 33.

President Lincoln accepted the plan upon the condition that whatever United States officer might be in command of the Department of the West should also be commissioned by the Governor to command the Missouri State militia; and that if the President changed the former, the Governor should make the corresponding change, in order that conflict of authority or of military plans might be

Lincoln, Endorsement, Nov. 6, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 456.

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avoided. This agreement was entered into between President Lincoln and Governor Gamble on November 6, and on November 27 Brigadier-General J. M. Schofield received orders from Halleck to raise, organize, and command this special militia corps. The plan was attended with reasonable success, and by the 15th of April, 1862, reported General Schofield, "an active, efficient force of 13,800 men was placed in the field," nearly all of cavalry. The raising and organizing of this force during the winter and spring of 1861–62 produced a certain degree of local military activity just at the season when the partisan and guerrilla operations of rebel sympathizers were necessarily impeded or wholly suspended by severe weather; and this, joined with the vigorous administration of General Halleck, and the fact that Curtis was chasing the army of Price out of Southwest Missouri, gave a somewhat delusive appearance of quiet and order throughout the State. We shall see how this security was rudely disturbed during the summer of 1862 by local efforts and uprisings, though the rebels were not able to bring about any formidable campaign of invasion, and Missouri as a whole remained immovable in her military and political adherence to the Union.

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Schofield, Report, W. R. Vol. XIII., p. 7.

Ibid., p. 8.

With a view still further to facilitate the restoration of public peace, the State Convention at the same October session extended an amnesty to repentant rebels, in an ordinance which provided that any person who would make and file a written oath to support the Federal and State Governments, declaring that he would not take up arms against the United States or the provisional gov-

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ernment of Missouri, nor give aid and comfort to their enemies during the present civil war, should be exempt from arrest and punishment for previous rebellion. Many persons took this oath, and doubtless kept it with sincere faith. But it seems no less certain that many others who took it so persistently violated both its spirit and letter as to render it practically of no service as an external test of allegiance to the Union. In the years of local hatred and strife which ensued, oaths were so recklessly taken and so willfully violated that a ceremony of adjuration became, in the public estimation, rather a sign of suspicion than an assurance of good faith. It grew into one of the standing jests of the camps that when a Union soldier found a rattlesnake, his comrades would instantly propose, with mock gravity, "Administer the oath to him, boys, and let him go."

CHAPTER VI

LINCOLN DIRECTS COÖPERATION

THE President was highly gratified when Halleck wrote from the Department of Missouri, under date of December 19, to McClellan, who was yet General-in-Chief, that the discipline of the troops was improving; that sundry minor expeditions had been successful; that Price would be ruined in Missouri by another retreat; and that he hoped soon to be able to attack him under favoring conditions; also that he was gradually curing the serious disorders in military administration bequeathed him by Frémont. "An excellent letter," wrote Lincoln, as an endorsement, though he also noted his regret that Halleck was unfavorably impressed with Lane on the Kansas border, from whose coöperation under Hunter, with a quasi-independent column, the President had hoped for substantial benefit. But the prospect at Washington was not so encouraging. Except to organize, drill, and review the Army of the Potomac, to make an unfruitful reconnaissance, and to suffer the lamentable Ball's Bluff disaster, McClellan had nothing to show for his five months of local, and two months of chief command. The splendid autumn weather, the wholesome air, and dry roads

Halleck to McClellan, Dec. 19, 1861, and Lincoln, Endorsement, Dec. 27, 1861. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 448–450.

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had come and gone. Rain, snow, and mud, crippling clogs to military movements in all lands and epochs, were to be expected for a quarter, if not for half, the coming year. Besides all this, McClellan had fallen seriously ill. With most urgent need of early action, every prospect of securing it seemed to be thus cut off. In this dilemma, Lincoln turned to the Western commanders. "General McClellan is sick," he telegraphed to Halleck on the last day of the year. "Are General Buell and yourself in concert?" The following day he repeated his inquiry, or rather his prompting suggestion that, McClellan being incapable of work, Buell and Halleck should at once establish a vigorous and hearty coöperation. Their replies were not specially promising. "There is no arrangement between General Halleck and myself," responded Buell, adding that he depended on McClellan for instructions to this end; while Halleck said, "I have never received a word from General Buell. I am not ready to coöperate with him," adding in his turn that he had written to McClellan, and that too much haste would ruin everything. Plainly, therefore, the military machine, both East and West, was not only at a complete standstill, but was without a programme.

Lincoln to Halleck and Buell, Dec. 31, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 524.

Lincoln to Buell and Halleck, Jan. 1, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 526.

Of what avail then were McClellan's office and function of general-in-chief if such a contingency revealed either his incapacity or his neglect? The force of this question is immensely increased when we see how in the same episode McClellan's acts followed Lincoln's suggestions. However silent and confiding in the skill and energy of his generals, the President had studied the military situa-

tion with unremitting diligence. In his telegram of December 31 to Halleck, he started a pregnant inquiry. "When he [Buell] moves on Bowling Green, what hinders it being reënforced from Columbus?" And he asked the same question at the same time of Buell. Halleck seems to have had no answer to make; Buell sent the only reply that was possible: "There is nothing to prevent Bowling Green being reënforced from Columbus if a military force is not brought to bear on the latter place." The sequel proves that Lincoln was not content to permit this know-nothing and do-nothing policy to continue. "I have just been with General McClellan, and he is much better," he wrote the day after New Year's; and in this interview the necessity for action and the telegrams from the Western commanders were fully discussed, as becomes evident from the fact that the following day McClellan wrote a letter to Halleck containing an earnest suggestion to remedy the neglect and need pointed out by Lincoln's dispatch of December 31. In this letter McClellan advised an expedition up the Cumberland River, a demonstration on Columbus, and a feint on the Tennessee River, all for the purpose of preventing reënforcements from joining Buckner and Johnston at Bowling Green, whom Buell was preparing to attack.

Lincoln to Halleck, Dec. 31, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 524.

Buell to Lincoln, Jan. 1, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 526.

Lincoln to Chase, Jan. 2, 1862. Warden, "Life of Salmon P. Chase," p. 395.

McClellan to Halleck, Jan. 3, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 527, 528

Meanwhile Lincoln's dispatch of inquiry had renewed the attention, and perhaps aroused the ambition, of Buell. He and Halleck had, after Lincoln's prompting, interchanged dispatches about concerted action. Halleck reported a withdrawal of troops from Missouri "almost impossible"; to which Buell replied that "the great power of the

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rebellion in the West is arrayed" on a line from Columbus to Bowling Green, and that two gunboat expeditions with a support of twenty thousand men should attack its center by way of the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, and that "whatever is done should be done speedily, within a few days." Halleck, however, did not favorably entertain the proposition. His reply discussed an altogether different question. He said it would be madness for him with his forces to attempt any serious operation against Camp Beauregard or Columbus, and that if Buell's Bowling Green movement required his help, it ought to be delayed a few weeks, when he could probably furnish some troops. Leaving altogether unanswered Buell's suggestion for the movement up the Cumberland and Tennessee, Halleck stated his strong disapproval of the Bowling Green movement, and on the same day he repeated these views a little more fully in a letter to the President. Premising that he could not then withdraw any troops from Missouri, "without risking the loss of this State," he said, "I know nothing of General Buell's intended operations, never having received any information in regard to the general plan of campaign. If it be intended that his column shall move on Bowling Green, while another moves from Cairo or Paducah on Columbus or Camp Beauregard, it will be a repetition of the same strategic error which produced the disaster of Bull Run. To operate on exterior lines against an enemy occupying a central position will fail, as it always has failed, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. It is condemned by every military authority I have ever

Buell to Halleck, Jan. 3, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 528, 529.

Halleck to Buell, Jan. 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 533.

read. General Buell's army and the forces at Paducah occupy precisely the same position in relation to each other and to the enemy as did the armies of McDowell and Patterson before the battle of Bull Run."

CHAP. VI. Halleck to Lincoln, Jan. 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 532, 533.

Lincoln, finding in these replies but a continuation not only of the delay, but also of the want of plans, and especially of energetic joint action which had thus far in a majority of cases marked the operations of the various commanders, was not disposed further to allow matters to remain in such unfruitful conditions. Under his prompting McClellan, on this same 6th of January, wrote to Buell: "Halleck, from his own account, will not soon be in a condition to support properly a movement up the Cumberland. Why not make the movement independently of and without waiting for that?" And on the next day Lincoln followed this inquiry with a still more energetic monition: "Please name as early a day as you safely can on or before which you can be ready to move southward in concert with Major-General Halleck. Delay is ruining us, and it is indispensable for me to have something definite. I send a like dispatch to Major-General Halleck." This peremptory order seems to have brought nothing except a reply from Halleck: "I have asked General Buell to designate a day for a demonstration to assist him. It is all I can do till I get arms." Three days later, Halleck's already quoted letter of the 6th reached Washington by mail, and after its perusal the President endorsed upon it, with a heart-sickness easily discernible in the words: "The within is a copy of a letter just received from General Halleck.

McClellan to Buell, Jan. 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 531.

Lincoln to Buell, Jan. 7, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 535.

Halleck to Lincoln, Jan. 7, 1862 (midnight). W. R. Vol. VII., p. 535.

Lincoln, endorsement Jan. 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 533.

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Nevertheless, something was being done; very little at the moment, it is true, but enough to form the beginning of momentous results. On the same day on which Halleck had written the discouraging letter commented upon by the President, he had also transmitted to Grant, at Cairo, the direction: "I wish you to make a demonstration in force on Mayfield and in the direction of Murray." The object was, as he further explained, to prevent reënforcements being sent to Buckner at Bowling Green. He was to threaten Camp Beauregard and Murray, to create the impression that not only was Dover (Fort Donelson) to be attacked, but that a great army to be gathered in the West was to sweep down towards Nashville, his own column being merely an advance-guard. Flag-officer Foote was to assist by a gunboat demonstration. "Be very careful, however," added Halleck, "to avoid a battle; we are not ready for that; but cut off detached parties, and give your men a little experience in skirmishing." If this order had gone to an unwilling or negligent officer, he could have found in his surrounding conditions abundant excuse for evasion and non-compliance. There was at Cairo, as at every other army post, large or small, lack of officers, of organization, of arms, of equipments, of transportation, of that multitude of things considered necessary to the efficiency of moving troops. But in the West the sudden increase of armies brought to command, and to direction and management, a large proportion of civilians, lacking methodical instruction and

Halleck to Grant, Jan. 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 533, 534.

experience, which was without question a serious defect, but which left them free to invent and adopt whatever expedients circumstances might suggest, or which rendered them satisfied and willing to enter upon undertakings amid a want of preparation and means, which better information might have led them to think indispensable. CHAP. VI.

The detailed reports and orders of the expedition we are describing clearly indicate these latter characteristics. We learn from them that the weather was bad, the roads heavy, quartermaster's department and transportation deficient, and gunboats without adequate crews. Yet nowhere does it appear that these things were treated as impediments. Halleck's instructions, dated January 6, were received by Grant on the morning of the 8th, and his answer was, that immediate preparations were being made for carrying them out, and that Flag-officer Andrew H. Foote would coöperate with three gunboats. "The continuous rains for the last week or more," says Grant, "have rendered the roads extremely bad, and will necessarily make our movement slow. This, however, will operate worse upon the enemy, if he should come out to meet us, than upon us." The movement began on the evening of January 9, and its main delay occurred through Halleck's orders. It was fully resumed on the 12th. Brigadier-General John A. McClernand, with five thousand men, marched southward, generally parallel to the Mississippi River, to Mayfield, midway between Fort Henry and Columbus, and pushed a reconnaissance close up to the latter place. Brigadier-General C. F. Smith, starting from Paducah, marched a strong column southward, 1862.

Grant to Halleck, Jan. 8, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 537, 538

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generally parallel to the Tennessee River, to Calloway near Fort Henry. Foote and Grant, with three gunboats, two of them new ironclads, ascended the Tennessee to Fort Henry, drew the fire of the fort, and threw several shells into the works.

Grant to Kelton, Jan. 14, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 551, 552.

We need not describe the routes, the precautions, the marching and countermarching to mystify the enemy. While the rebels were yet expecting a further advance, the several detachments were already well on their return. "The expedition," says Grant, "if it had no other effect, served as a fine reconnaissance." But it had more positive results. Fort Henry and Columbus were thoroughly alarmed, and drew in their outposts, while the Union forces learned from inspection that the route offered a feasible line of march to attack and invest Columbus, and demonstrated the inherent weakness and vulnerability of Fort Henry. This, be it remembered, was done with raw forces and without preparation, but with officers and men responding alike promptly to every order and executing their task more than cheerfully, even eagerly, with such means as were at hand when the order came. "The reconnaissance thus made," reports McClernand, "completed a march of one hundred and forty miles by the cavalry and seventy-five miles by the infantry over icy or miry roads, during a most inclement season." He further reports that the circumstances of the case "prevented me from taking, on leaving Cairo, the five days' supply of rations and forage directed by the commanding officer of this district; hence the necessity of an early resort to other sources of supply. None other presented but to quarter upon the enemy or to pur-

McClernand, Report, Jan. 24, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 71.

chase from loyal citizens. I accordingly resorted to both expedients as I had opportunity." Lincoln's prompting did not end with merely having produced this reconnaissance. The President's patience was well-nigh exhausted; and while his uneasiness drove him to no act of rashness, it caused him to repeat his admonitions and suggestions. In addition to his telegrams and letters to the Western commanders between December 31 and January 6, he wrote to both on January 13 to point out how advantage might be taken of the military condition as it then existed. Halleck had emphasized the danger of moving on "exterior lines" and insisted that it was merely repeating the error committed at Bull Run, and would as inevitably lead to disaster. Lincoln in his letter showed that the defeat at Bull Run did not result from movement on exterior lines, but from failure to use exterior lines with judgment and concert; and he further illustrated how the Western armies might now, by judicious coöperation, secure important military results.

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My dear Sir: Your dispatch of yesterday is received, in which you say: "I have received your letter and General McClellan's, and will at once devote all my efforts to your views and his." In the midst of my many cares, I have not seen nor asked to see General McClellan's letter to you. For my own views, I have not offered, and do not now offer, them as orders; and while I am glad to have them respectfully considered, I would blame you to follow them contrary to your own clear judgment, unless I should put them in the form of orders. As to General McClellan's views, you understand your duty in regard to them better than I do. With this preliminary I state my general idea of this war to be that we have the greater numbers, and the enemy has the greater facility of con-

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centrating forces upon points of collision; that we must fail unless we can find some way of making our advantage an overmatch for his; and that this can only be done by menacing him with superior forces at different points at the same time, so that we can safely attack one or both if he makes no change; and if he weakens one to strengthen the other, forbear to attack the strengthened one, but seize and hold the weakened one, gaining so much. To illustrate: Suppose last summer, when Winchester ran away to reënforce Manassas, we had forborne to attack Manassas, but had seized and held Winchester. I mention this to illustrate and not to criticize. I did not lose confidence in McDowell, and I think less harshly of Patterson than some others seem to. In application of the general rule I am suggesting, every particular case will have its modifying circumstances, among which the most constantly present and most difficult to meet will be the want of perfect knowledge of the enemy's movements. This had its part in the Bull Run case; but worse in that case was the expiration of the terms of the three months' men. Applying the principle to your case, my idea is that Halleck shall menace Columbus and "down river" generally, while you menace Bowling Green and East Tennessee. If the enemy shall concentrate at Bowling Green do not retire from his front, yet do not fight him there either, but seize Columbus and East Tennessee, one or both, left exposed by the concentration at Bowling Green. It is a matter of no small anxiety to me, and one which I am sure you will not overlook, that the East Tennessee line is so long and over so bad a road.

Lincoln to Buell, Jan. 13, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 928, 929.

This letter was addressed to Buell, but a copy of it was also sent to Halleck. Buell made no reply, but Halleck sent an indirect answer, a week later, in a long letter to General McClellan under date of January 20. The communication is not a model of correspondence, when we remember that it emanated from a trained writer upon military science. It is long and somewhat rambling; it finds fault with politics and politicians in war, in evident igno-

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rance of both politics and politicians. It charges that past want of success "is attributable to the politicians rather than to the generals" in plain contradiction of the actual facts. It condemns "pepper-box strategy" and recommends detached operations in the same breath. The more noticeable point of the letter is that while reiterating that the General-in-Chief had furnished no general plan, and while the principal commanders had neither unity of views nor concert of action, it ventures, though somewhat feebly, to recommend a combined system of operations for the West. "The idea of moving down the Mississippi by steam," says Halleck, in this letter, "is, in my opinion, impracticable, or at least premature. It is not a proper line of operations, at least now. A much more feasible plan is to move up the Cumberland and Tennessee, making Nashville the first objective point. This would turn Columbus and force the abandonment of Bowling Green. . . This line of the Cumberland or Tennessee is the great central line of the Western theater of war, with the Ohio below the mouth of Green River as the base, and two good navigable rivers extending far into the interior of the theater of operations. But the plan should not be attempted without a large force, not less than sixty thousand effective men."

Halleck to McClellan, Jan. 20, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 508–511.

The idea was by no means new. Buell had tentatively suggested it to McClellan, as early as November 27; and had again specifically elaborated it "as the most important strategical point in the whole field of operations" to McClellan on December 29, and as the "center" of the rebellion front in the West to Halleck on January 3. Yet, recog-

1861. Buell to McClellan, Nov. 27 and Dec. 29, 1861. Buell to Halleck, Jan. 3, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 451, 521, 528, 529.

CHAP. VI. nizing this line as the enemy's chief weakness, McClellan at Washington, Buell at Louisville, and Halleck at St. Louis, holding the President's unlimited trust and authority, had allowed nearly two months to elapse, directing the Government power to other objects, to the neglect, not alone of military success, but of plans of coöperation, of counsel, of intention to use this great and recognized military advantage, until the country was fast losing confidence and even hope. Even now Halleck did not propose immediately to put his theory into practice. Like Buell, he was calling for more troops for the "politicians" to supply. It is impossible to guess when he might have been ready to move on his great strategic line, if subordinate officers, more watchful and enterprising, had not in a measure forced the necessity upon his attention.

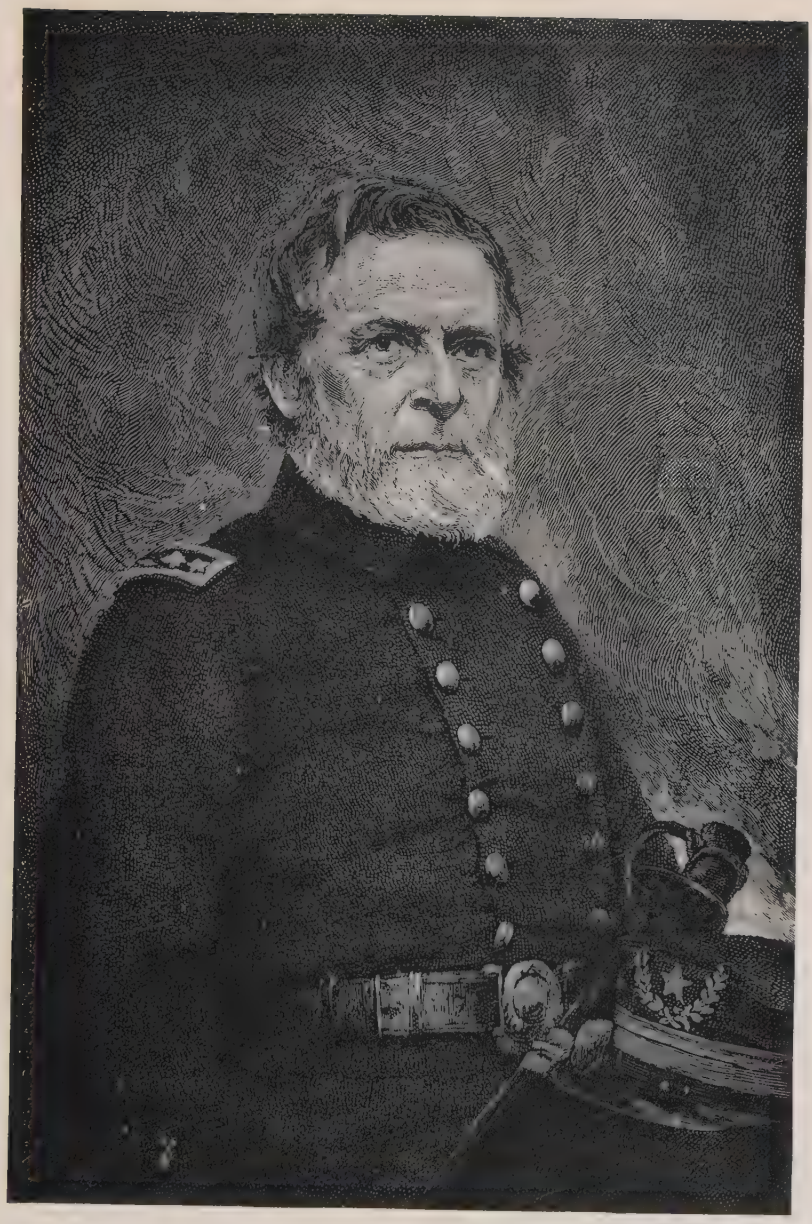
CHAPTER VII

GRANT AND THOMAS IN KENTUCKY

THE opening of the year 1862 brought stirring events to the armies of the West, and in their action the name of General Grant begins to acquire a special prominence and value. In the early stage of military organization in the West, when so many volunteer colonels were called to active duty in the field, the West Point education of Grant and his practical campaign training in the Mexican war made themselves immediately felt and appreciated at the department headquarters. His usefulness and superiority were evinced by the clearness and brevity of his correspondence, the correctness of routine reports and promptness of their transmission, the pertinence and practical quality of his suggestions, the readiness and fertility of expedient with which he executed orders. Any one reading over his letters of this first period of his military service is struck by the fact that through him something was always accomplished. There was absence of excuse, complaint, or delay; always the report of a task performed. If his means or supplies were imperfect, he found or improvised the best available substitute; if he could not execute the full requirement, he per-

CHAP. VII. formed so much of it as was possible. He always had an opinion, and that opinion was positive, intelligible, practical. We find therefore that his allotted tasks from the first continually rose in importance. He gained in authority and usefulness not by solicitation or intrigue, but by services rendered. He was sent to more and more difficult duties, to larger supervision, to heavier responsibilities. From guarding a station at Mexico on the North Missouri Railroad, to protecting a railroad terminus near Ironton in Southeast Missouri; from there to brief inspection duty at Jefferson City, then to the command of the military district of Southeast Missouri; finally to the command of the great military depot and rendezvous at Cairo, Illinois, with its several outlying posts and districts, and the supervision of its complicated details about troops, arms, and supplies to be collected and forwarded in all directions. Clearly it was not chance which brought him to such duties, but his fitness to perform them. It was from the vantage-ground of this enlarged command that he had checkmated the rebel occupation of Columbus by seizing Paducah and Smithland. And from Cairo he also organized and led his first command in field fighting, at what is known as the battle of Belmont.

Just before Frémont was relieved, and while he was in the field in nominal pursuit of Price, he had ordered Grant to clear Southeastern Missouri of guerrillas, with the double view of restoring local authority and preventing reënforcements to Price. Movements were progressing to this end when it became apparent that the rebel stronghold at Columbus was preparing to send out a column.



REAR-ADMIRAL ANDREW HULL FOOTE.

Grant organized an expedition to counteract this design, and on the evening of November 6 left Cairo with about 3000 men, on transports, under convoy of two gunboats, and steamed down the river. Upon information gained while on his route he determined to break up a rebel camp at Belmont Landing, on the Missouri shore opposite Columbus, as the best means of making his expedition effective. On the morning of the 7th he landed his troops at Hunter's Point, three miles above Belmont, and marched to a favorable place for attack back of the rebel encampment, which was situated in a large open field and was protected on the land side by a line of abatis. By the time Grant reached his position the rebel camp, originally consisting of a single regiment, had been reënforced by five regiments from Columbus under General Pillow. A deliberate battle with about equal forces ensued. Though the Confederate line courageously contested the ground, the Union line, steadily advancing, swept the rebels back, penetrating the abatis, and gaining the camp of the enemy, who in disorder took shelter under the steep river bank. Grant's troops had gained a complete and substantial victory, but they now frittered it away by a disorderly exultation. The record does not show who was responsible for the unmilitary conduct, but it quickly brought its retribution. Before the Unionists were aware of it, General Polk had sent an additional reënforcement of several regiments across the river and hurriedly marched them to cut off the Federal retreat, which instead of an orderly march from the battlefield became a hasty scramble to get out of danger.

CHAP. VII. 1861.

CHAP. VII. Grant himself, unaware that the few companies left as a guard near the landing had already embarked, remained on shore to find them, and encountered instead the advancing rebel line. Discovering his mistake he rode back to the landing, where "his horse slid down the river bank on its haunches and trotted on board a transport over a plank thrust out for him." Belmont was a drawn battle; or rather it was first a victory for the Federals and then a victory for the Confederates. The courage and the loss were nearly equal: 79 killed and 289 wounded on the Union side; 105 killed and 419 wounded on the Confederate side. Brigadier-General McClernand, second in command in the battle of Belmont, was a fellow-townsman of the President, and to him Lincoln wrote the following letter of thanks and encouragement to the troops engaged:

M. F. Force, "From Fort Henry to Corinth," p. 23.

Ibid.

> This is not an official but a social letter. You have had a battle, and without being able to judge as to the precise measure of its value, I think it is safe to say that you, and all with you, have done honor to yourselves and the flag, and service to the country. Most gratefully do I thank you and them. In my present position, I must care for the whole nation; but I hope it will be no injustice to any other State for me to indulge a little home pride that Illinois does not disappoint us. I have just closed a long interview with Mr. Washburne, in which he has detailed the many difficulties you, and those with you, labor under. Be assured we do not forget or neglect you. Much, very much, goes undone; but it is because we have not the power to do it faster than we do. Some of your forces are without arms, but the same is true here, and at every other place where we have considerable bodies of troops. The plain matter of fact is, our good people have rushed to the rescue of the Government faster than the Government can find arms to put

into their hands. It would be agreeable to each division of the army to know its own precise destination; but the Government cannot immediately, nor inflexibly at any time, determine as to all; nor, if determined, can it tell its friends without, at the same time, telling its enemies. We know you do all as wisely and well as you can; and you will not be deceived if you conclude the same is true of us. Please give my respects and thanks to all.

Lincoln to McClernand, Nov. 10, 1861. MS.

Belmont having been a mere episode, it drew after it no further movement in that direction. Grant and his command resumed their routine work of neighborhood police and observation. Buell and Halleck, both coming to their departments as new commanders shortly afterwards, were absorbed with difficulties at other points. Secession was not yet quieted in Kentucky. The Union troops at Cairo, Paducah, Smithland, and other river towns yet stood on the defensive, fearing rebel attack, rather than preparing to attack rebels. Columbus and Bowling Green were the principal Confederate camps, and attracted and received the main attention of the Union commanders. The first noteworthy occurrence following Belmont, as well as the beginning of the succession of brilliant Union victories which distinguished the early months of the year 1862, was the battle of Mill Springs in Eastern Kentucky. The earnest desire of President Lincoln and General McClellan that a Union column should be sent to seize and hold East Tennessee, and the reluctance and neglect of General Buell to carry out their wishes, have been described. General Thomas remained posted in Eastern Kentucky, hoping that he might be called upon to form his column and lead it through the Cumberland Gap to Knoxville; but the weeks

CHAP. VII. passed by, and the orders which he received only tended to scatter his few regiments for local defense and observation. With the hesitation of the Union army at this point the Confederates became bolder. Brigadier-General F. K. Zollicoffer established himself in a fortified camp on the north bank of the Cumberland River, where he could, at the same time, defend Cumberland Gap and incite Eastern Kentucky to rebellion. Here he became so troublesome that Buell found it necessary to dislodge him, and late in December sent General Thomas orders to that effect. Thomas was weak in numbers, but strong in vigilance and courage. He made a difficult march during the early weeks of January, 1862, and halted at Logan's Cross Roads, within ten miles of the rebel camp, to await the junction of his few regiments. The enemy, under Zollicoffer and his district commander, George B. Crittenden, resolved to advance and crush him before he could bring his force together. Thomas prepared, and accepted battle. The enemy had made a fatiguing night march of nine miles through a cold rain and over muddy roads. On the

1862. morning of January 19 the battle was begun with spirit, and soon had a dramatic incident. The rebel commander, Zollicoffer, mistaking a Union regiment, rode forward and told its commanding-officer, Colonel Speed S. Fry, that he was firing upon friends. Fry, not aware that Zollicoffer was an enemy, turned away to order his men to stop firing. At this moment one of Zollicoffer's aides rode up, and, seeing the true state of affairs, drew his revolver and began firing at Fry, wounding his horse; Fry, wheeling in turn, drew his revolver and returned

Henry M. Cist, "Army of the Cumberland," pp. 17, 18.

the fire, shooting Zollicoffer through the heart. The fall of the rebel commander served to hasten and complete the defeat of the Confederates. They retreated in disorder to their fortified camp at Mill Springs. Thomas ordered immediate pursuit, and the same night invested their camp and made preparations to storm their intrenchments the following morning. When day came, however, it was found that the rebels had crossed the Cumberland River during the night, abandoning their wounded, twelve pieces of artillery, many small arms, and extensive supplies, and had fled in utter dispersion to the mountains. It was one of the most remarkable Union victories of the war. General Thomas's forces consisted of a little over six regiments, those of Crittenden and Zollicoffer of over ten regiments. It was more than a defeat for the Confederates. Their army was annihilated, and Cumberland Gap once more stood exposed, so that Buell might have sent a Union column and taken possession of Eastern Tennessee with but feeble opposition. It is possible that the brilliant opportunity would at last have tempted him to comply with the urgent wishes of the President and the express orders of the General-in-Chief, had not unexpected events in another quarter diverted his attention and interest.

Thomas B. Van Horne, "History of the Army of the Cumberland." Vol. I., p. 57.

There was everywhere, about the months of December, 1861, and January, 1862, a perceptible increase of the Union armies by fresh regiments from the Northern States, a better supply of arms through recent importations, an increase of funds from new loans, and the delivery for use of various war materials, the product of the summer's manu-

CHAP. VII. facture. Of prime importance to the military operations which centered at Cairo was the completion and equipment of the new gunboats. A word of retrospect concerning this arm of the military service is here necessary. Commander John Rodgers was sent West in the month of May, 1861, to begin the construction of war vessels for Western rivers. Without definite plans, he had purchased, and hastily converted and armed as best he could, three river steamers. These were put into service in September; they were provided with cannon, but had no iron plating. They were the *Tyler*, of seven guns, the *Lexington*, of six guns, and the *Conestoga*, of three guns. Making Cairo their central station, they served admirably in the lighter duties of river police, in guarding transports, and in making hasty trips of reconnaissance. For the great expedition down the Mississippi, projected during the summer and fall of 1861, a more powerful class of vessels was provided.[1] The distinguished civil engineer, James B. Eads, designed, and was authorized to build, seven new gunboats, to carry thirteen guns each, and to be protected about the bows with iron plating capable of resisting the fire of heavy artillery. They were named the *Cairo*, *Carondelet*, *Cincinnati*, *Louisville*, *Mound City*, *Pittsburg*, and *St. Louis*. Two additional gunboats of the same type of construction, but of

[1] To show the unremitting interest of the President in these preparations, and how his encouragement and prompting followed even their minor details, we quote from his autograph manuscript a note to the Secretary of War dated Jan. 24, 1862: "On reflection, I think you better make a peremptory order on the ordnance officer at Pittsburgh to ship the ten mortars and two beds to Cairo instantly, and all others as fast as finished till ordered to stop, reporting each shipment to the department here."

larger size,— the *Benton*, of sixteen guns, and the *Essex*, of five guns,—were converted from other vessels about the same time. At the time Commodore Foote finally accepted the first seven (January 15, 1862), it was found impossible to supply them with crews of Eastern seamen. Resort was had to Western steamboatmen, and also to volunteers from infantry recruits.

Foote to Meigs, Jan. 15, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 504, 505.

The joint reconnaissance of Grant and Foote to Fort Henry on the Tennessee River, January 14, has been related. A second examination was made by General C. F. Smith, who on January 22 reported that he had been within two miles and a half of the fort; that the river had risen fourteen feet since the last visit, giving a better opportunity to reconnoiter; more important, that the high water had drowned out a troublesome advance battery, and that, in his opinion, two iron-clad gunboats could make short work of it. It is evident that, possessed of this additional information, Grant and Foote immediately resolved upon vigorous measures. Grant had already asked permission to visit Halleck at St. Louis. This was given; but Halleck refused to entertain his project of an attack. So firmly convinced was Grant, however, that his plan was good, that, though unsuccessful at first, he quickly renewed the request. "Commanding-General Grant and myself," telegraphed Foote to Halleck (January 28, 1862), "are of opinion that Fort Henry, on the Tennessee River, can be carried with four iron-clad gunboats and troops to permanently occupy. Have we your authority to move for that purpose when ready?" To this Grant on the same day added

Smith to Asst. Adj.-Gen., Jan. 22, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 561.

Grant, "Memoirs." Vol. I., p. 287.

Foote to Halleck, Jan. 28, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 120.

CHAP. VII. Grant to Halleck, Jan. 28, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 121.

the direct proposal: "With permission, I will take Fort Henry, on the Tennessee, and establish and hold a large camp there." It would appear that no immediate answer was returned, for on the following day Grant renewed his proposition with more emphasis.

Ibid.

It is easy to perceive what produced a change in Halleck's mind. Grant's persistent urging was evidently the main influence, but two other events contributed essentially to the result. The first was the important victory gained by Thomas at Mill Springs in Eastern Kentucky on January 19, the certain news of which was probably just reaching him; the second was a telegram from Washington, informing him that General Beauregard, with fifteen regiments from the Confederate army in Virginia, was being sent to Kentucky to be added to Johnston's army. "I was not ready to move," explains Halleck afterwards, "but deemed best to anticipate the arrival of Beauregard's forces." It is well also to remember in this connection that, three days before, President Lincoln's General War Order No. 1 had been published, ordering a general movement of all the armies of the Union on the coming 22d of February. Whatever induced it, the permission now given was full and hearty. "Make your preparations to take and hold Fort Henry," Halleck telegraphed to Grant on the 30th of January; "I will send you written instructions by mail."

McClellan to Halleck and Buell, Jan. 29, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 571.

W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 587, 593.

Halleck to Grant, Jan. 30, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 121.

Grant and Foote had probably already begun their preparation. Receiving Halleck's instructions on February 1, Grant on the following day started his expedition of fifteen thousand men on transports, and Foote, on the 4th, accompanied him

with seven gunboats for convoy and attack. Their plan contemplated a bombardment by the fleet from the river, and assault on the land side by the troops. For this purpose General McClernand, with a division, was landed four miles below the fort on February 4. They made a reconnaissance on the 5th, and, being joined by another division under General Smith, were ordered forward to invest the fort on the 6th. This required a circuitous march of eight miles, during which the gunboats of Flag-officer Foote, having less than half the distance to go by the river, moved on and began the bombardment. The capture proved easier than was anticipated. General Lloyd Tilghman, the Confederate commander of the fort, had, early that morning, sent away his three thousand infantry to Fort Donelson, being convinced that he was beset by an overpowering force. He kept only one company of artillerists to work the eleven river guns of the fort; with these he defended the work about two hours, but without avail. Foote's four iron-plated gunboats steamed up boldly within six hundred yards. The bombardment, though short, was well sustained on both sides, and not without its fluctuating chances. Two of the heaviest guns in the fort were soon silenced, one bursting, and the other being rendered useless by an accident with the priming wire. At this point, a rebel shot passed through the casemate and boiler of the gunboat *Essex*, and she drifted helplessly out of the fight. But the remaining gunboats continued their close and fierce attack, and five more of the rebel guns being speedily disabled, General Tilghman hauled down his flag and went on board to surrender the fort. Mc-

1862.

McClernand, Report, Feb. 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 126–130.

CHAP. VII. Clernand's troops, from the land side, soon after entered the work and took formal possession. On the same day Grant telegraphed to Halleck, "Fort Henry is ours"; and his dispatch bore yet another significant announcement eminently characteristic of the man, "I shall take and destroy Fort Donelson on the 8th."

Grant to Halleck, Feb. 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 124.

CHAPTER VIII

CAMERON AND STANTON

WHEN the men of the South plotted secession and declared war to perpetuate and extend slavery, they little dreamed what a sure and relentless agency for its destruction they set in motion. It has been related how hostilities opened with Butler's offer to suppress a slave rising in Maryland, and how from some of the earlier camps fugitives were returned to their owners; also how in a few months the practice of the army changed to giving them wholesale shelter and employment, and to enforcing the confiscation act of Congress which broke the legal bondage of those whom the rebels employed in hostile military service. The unavoidable processes of war soon moved the question forward another step. If the army undertook to employ negroes in military work at exposed points, must it not protect them, and, as a necessary consequence, must it not permit them to protect themselves and furnish them weapons for defense? This question became important when the sea-coast expeditions were organized, particularly in the one destined for Port Royal, where a district with a largely preponderant slave population was to be attacked. Friendly blacks in great numbers would be sure to

April 23, 1861.

CHAP. VIII. flock to the Union lines, and, the climate being extremely unhealthy for Northern troops, it was desirable to employ them for labor and fatigue duty whenever possible. The Government could not do otherwise than give the commander permission to use every military advantage which might present itself.

In drawing up instructions on this point, the Assistant Secretary of War, after referring to prior orders, continued: "Special directions adapted to special circumstances cannot be given. Much must be referred to your own discretion as commanding general of the expedition. You will, however, in general, avail yourself of the services of any persons, whether fugitives from labor or not, who may offer them to the National Government. You will employ such persons in such service as they may be fitted for — either as ordinary employés, or, if special circumstances seem to require it, in any other capacity, with such organization (in squads, companies, or otherwise) as you may deem most beneficial to the service." When this instruction was read to President Lincoln, he foresaw that the latitude it gave might cause a terrible outcry of malicious criticism, and he therefore interlined with his own hand the following qualifying sentence: "This, however, not to mean a general arming of them for military service."

T. A. Scott to T. W. Sherman, Oct. 14, 1861. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 176.

I. N. Arnold, "Lincoln and Slavery," p. 236.

If any political design lay hidden within the original phraseology of the instruction as it came from the War Department, it escaped notice or comment, because it represented the actual requirements of the moment in all save the cautionary limit which Mr. Lincoln's amendment supplied.

His own prudence in dealing with the slavery question was, however, not imitated by all those about him. The Frémont incident sharply marked the rapid drift and development of public opinion on this sensitive topic, and men were becoming either more conservative or more progressive, according to their several convictions. It was not unnatural that political leaders should begin to trim their sails to this fresh breeze of popular sentiment, and before long it furnished an occurrence out of which grew the first change in President Lincoln's Cabinet. In preparing to transmit to Congress, at its December session, the customary official documents which accompany the President's message, Mr. Lincoln found, to his surprise, that the annual report of the Secretary of War had been printed, and, without being submitted to his inspection, mailed to the postmasters of the chief cities to be handed to the press as soon as the telegraph should announce that the reading of the message was completed in Congress. When a copy came to his hands the reason for this haste was quite apparent; in its closing paragraphs Secretary Cameron's report took distinct ground in favor of arming the negroes and incorporating them in the military service. Referring to the slaves abandoned by their owners in the territory captured by the Port Royal expedition, the report said:

CHAP. VIII. 1861.

> Those who make war against the Government justly forfeit all rights of property, privilege, or security derived from the Constitution and laws against which they are in armed rebellion; and as the labor and service of their slaves constitute the chief property of the rebels, such property should share the common fate of war, to

CHAP. VIII.

> which they have devoted the property of loyal citizens. . . It is as clearly a right of the Government to arm slaves, when it may become necessary, as it is to use gunpowder taken from the enemy. Whether it is expedient to do so is purely a military question. . . What to do with that species of property is a question that time and circumstance will solve, and need not be anticipated further than to repeat that they cannot be held by the Government as slaves. It would be useless to keep them as prisoners of war; and self-preservation, the highest duty of a government, or of individuals, demands that they should be disposed of or employed in the most effective manner that will tend most speedily to suppress the insurrection and restore the authority of the Government. If it shall be found that the men who have been held by the rebels as slaves are capable of bearing arms and performing efficient military service, it is the right, and may become the duty, of the Government to arm and equip them, and employ their services against the rebels, under proper military regulation, discipline, and command.

Report, Secretary of War, Dec. 1, 1861, 1st Edition, Suppressed Copy.

While Mr. Lincoln agreed perfectly with the Secretary of War in the abstract right of the Government to use abandoned or fugitive negroes in any military capacity, he did not think the time had arrived for forming them into marching regiments; neither did he deem it expedient that an official declaration of such a purpose should be published by a prominent officer of his Administration. The pamphlet copies of the report were still in the leading post-offices. These were hastily recalled by telegraph, and Secretary Cameron printed a new edition, modified according to the President's direction, by omitting all that portion of the argument relating to the controverted question, and in its place inserting a short paragraph to the effect that the slaves on captured or abandoned plantations should not be returned to their

masters, but withheld to lessen the enemy's military resources.[1] CHAP. VIII.

Ordinarily so radical a difference in administrative policy, the abrupt manner of its promulgation, and the peremptory recall and modification of a Secretary's report, would scarcely fail to cause a disagreeable Cabinet explosion. Lincoln's uniform good-nature and considerate forbearance, however, enabled him to endure and manage the incident without a quarrel, or even the least manifestation of ill-will on either side. Having corrected his minister's haste and imprudence, the President indulged in no further comment, and Cameron, yielding to superior authority, received the implied rebuke with becoming grace. From the confidential talks with his intimates it was clear enough that he expected a dismissal. But Lincoln never acted in a harsh or arbitrary mood. For the time being the personal relations between the President and his Secretary of War remained unchanged. They met in Cabinet consultations, or for the daily dispatch of routine business, with the same cordial ease as before. Nevertheless, each of them realized

[1] "It is already a grave question what shall be done with those slaves who were abandoned by their owners on the advance of our troops into Southern territory, as at Beaufort district in South Carolina. The number left within our control at that point is very considerable, and similar cases will probably occur. What shall be done with them? Can we afford to send them forward to their masters, to be by them armed against us, or used in producing supplies to sustain the rebellion? Their labor may be useful to us; withheld from the enemy it lessens his military resources, and withholding them has no tendency to induce the horrors of insurrection, even in the rebel communities. They constitute a military resource, and, being such, that they should not be turned over to the enemy is too plain to discuss. Why deprive him of supplies by a blockade and voluntarily give him men to produce them?" — Report of the Secretary of War, December 1, 1861 (Revised Copy).

CHAP. VIII.

that the circumstance had created a situation of difficulty and embarrassment which could not be indefinitely prolonged. Cameron began to signify his weariness of the onerous labors of the War Department, and hinted to the President that he would greatly prefer the less responsible duties of a foreign mission. Lincoln said nothing for several weeks, but he was waiting for a favorable moment when he might make a Cabinet change with the least official friction or public attention. To outsiders the affair seemed to have completely blown over, when, on January 11, 1862, Lincoln wrote the following short note:

MY DEAR SIR: As you have more than once expressed a desire for a change of position, I can now gratify you, consistently with my view of the public interest. I therefore propose nominating you to the Senate, next Monday, as Minister to Russia.

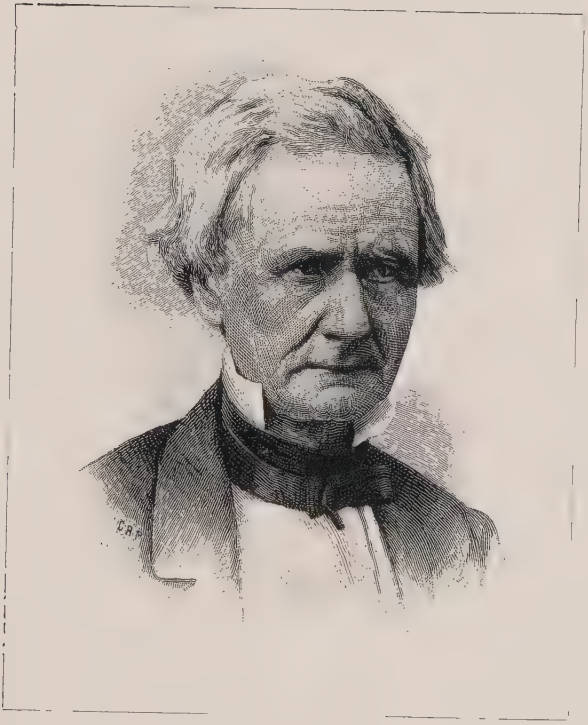
Very sincerely, your friend,

A. LINCOLN.

Lincoln to Cameron, Jan. 11, 1862. MS.

There is an interesting passage in the published diary of Secretary Chase, informing us that this note, written on Saturday, was shown by Cameron on Sunday afternoon to Secretaries Seward and Chase; also implying that several separate and joint interviews had been going on between these three Cabinet ministers for a day or two previous, in which they discussed the question of Cameron's retirement, his nomination to Russia, and the equally important topic of who should become his successor in the War Department. Three points seem evident from the record: that while they all had a hint of the change, neither of them knew definitely whether it would be finally made, or when it

Warden, "Life of Chase," pp. 400, 401.



SIMON CAMERON.

would occur, or who would be called to fill the va- CHAP. VIII.
cancy. Chase laments that Seward might suspect him of not dealing frankly; Seward is represented as appearing to know more than he communicated, and Cameron as hesitating between "no and yes." They finally all joined in the opinion that the most agreeable and the fittest successor in the War Department would be Stanton. And, if we may trust the language of the diary, each of them was impressed with the belief that he alone was the chief agency in bringing about the change, in delicately causing its hearty acceptance, and especially in selecting the man destined to become the greatest war minister the Government has ever had. The truth was that a stronger will and a yet more delicate tact had inspired and guided them all. Lincoln, securing his main purpose of once more combining these three influential leaders in renewed support of his Administration, in the midst of a Cabinet crisis changing rupture into strength and discord into harmony, was quite content to allow them to appropriate the merit of the success. On the following day the new nominations went to the Senate, Jan. 13, 1862. where they were speedily confirmed. Nearly a month elapsed before the usual perfunctory and *ex post facto* correspondence was published in the newspapers, wherein the incident was recited in more formal phraseology.

It is proper to mention in this connection that the Cabinet change here described caused no change in the friendship between Lincoln and Cameron. Three or four months afterwards a violent factional assault upon the latter in the House of Representatives resulted in the passage of a

CHAP. VIII. resolution of censure, charging Cameron, while Secretary of War, with having adopted in certain transactions "a policy highly injurious to the public service." As soon as Mr. Lincoln's attention was called to the resolution, he wrote and transmitted to the House a special message explaining that the censured "transactions" occurred during the days of the first and extreme peril of the Government, when Washington was cut off from communication with the North by the insurrection in Maryland; that the acts complained of were not done by Cameron exclusively, but were ordered by the President with the full assent of his Cabinet, every member of which, with himself, was equally responsible for the alleged irregularity. Cameron gratefully remembered this voluntary and manly defense of his official integrity. He remained one of the most intimate and devoted of Lincoln's personal friends, and became one of the earliest and most effective advocates of his renomination and reëlection to the Presidency.

"Globe," April 30, 1862, p. 1888.

"Globe," May 27, 1862, p. 2383.

Edwin M. Stanton, the new Secretary of War, who became at once a prominent and powerful figure in the Government, was born in Steubenville, Ohio, December 19, 1814. He was educated at Kenyon College, and began the practice of law in 1836. By ten years of studious industry he acquired the skill and rank in his profession which justified his removal, in 1847, to the great commercial and manufacturing city of Pittsburgh. From this point he was intrusted with a class of cases which took him so frequently before the Supreme Court of the United States that in 1856 he permanently established his office in Washington City.

Being an ardent Democrat in politics, and both the President and Attorney-General of the United States being at that time citizens of Pennsylvania, his local influence and acquaintance probably secured his employment as counsel for the Government in certain important land cases in California during the year 1858. This employment necessarily brought him into confidential relations with the Department of Justice and the Attorney-General. That his services proved valuable and satisfactory is shown by the double fact that President Buchanan consulted him in the preparation of his annual message, and on the retirement of Cass from his Cabinet, about the middle of December, 1860, appointed him Attorney-General to succeed Judge Black, who was made Secretary of State.

There is a conflict of evidence as to Stanton's precise attitude in this new relation. Ex-Secretary Black has written that he fully adopted the non-coercion views of his (Black's) official opinion of November 20, and of Buchanan's annual message formulating the doctrine of non-coercion; also that he read and indorsed Buchanan's special message of January 8, 1861, which was a virtual abdication of executive functions. But Black's own opinions and position between these dates are palpably inconsistent and antagonistic; witness his written memorandum, given to the President in the new Cabinet crisis of December 30, advising a certain course and explaining, this "is *coercion*." Black further explains that Stanton copied the memorandum, and freely joined in the advice. Buchanan's Cabinet was undergoing a revolutionary convulsion. Black was evidently steering between op-

"Galaxy," June, 1870, p. 824.

Black, "Essays and Speeches," pp. 14-17.

CHAP. VIII. posing factions till the President called him to lead the Union section and sentiment of his Cabinet, when he, for the first time, took positive and consistent ground. His own version of these transactions may be pardoned for representing himself as the directing leader in this partial transformation of Buchanan's Administration. Those who were familiar with the characters of the two men will rather conclude that Stanton's positive nature and impulsive energy were the real sources of the decided stand which Black then for the first time assumed. The same revolutionary dangers and apprehensions explain another apparent impossibility. There is direct and indirect testimony from prominent Republican leaders — Seward, Wilson, Sumner, Dawes, Howard, and perhaps others — that during this period Stanton, a stubborn and prejudiced Buchanan Democrat, was in secret communication and concert with those leading spirits of the opposition. Black, who ten years afterwards wrote a bitterly partisan article questioning the facts, asks: "Did he [Stanton] accept the confidence of the President [Buchanan] and the Cabinet, with a predetermined intent to betray it?" and calls such conduct "conspiring with Abolitionists." The simple truth appears to be that Stanton, becoming a member of Buchanan's Cabinet with no suspicion of the conspiracy by which Jefferson Davis and Secretaries Cobb, Floyd, and Thompson ensnared and for the moment controlled it, was horrified at the revelation which his new duties opened to him. Seeing President Buchanan in an attitude of hopeless irresolution, amid a preponderance of treasonable advice, he entered into secret relations with

"Galaxy," June, 1870, pp. 824, 825.

the Republican leaders, and disclosed the facts, as the only available rock of safety in the stress and peril of impending revolution.[1]

Several years before, Stanton had met the new President under peculiar circumstances. It happened that Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Stanton, and George Harding were associated as counsel in a celebrated reaper patent case which was tried in the city of Cincinnati before the United States Circuit Court, though they had not met in consultation prior to the trial. It is related on the one hand that Lincoln was senior counsel, and that when the hearing came on, Stanton, undervaluing Lincoln's character and ability, with unprofessional assurance, grasped the *rôle* of making the argument on the law points, to which, as junior counsel, he had no claim under the custom of the bar; that as the Court would hear only two lawyers on a side, and as the review

[1] In "The Works of Charles Sumner," Vol. V., pp. 459, 460, and 462, we find the following:

"Yesterday I was with the Attorney-General, an able, experienced, Northern Democratic lawyer, with the instincts of our profession on the relation of cause and effect. He drew me into his room, but there were clerks there; opening the door into another room there were clerks there too; and then traversing five different rooms, he found them all occupied by clerks; when, opening the door into the entry, he told me he was 'surrounded by Secessionists,' who would report in an hour to the newspapers any interview between us; that he must see me at some other time and place; that everything was bad as could be; that Virginia would certainly secede; that the conspiracy there was the most widespread and perfect."—Sumner to Governor Andrew, January 26, 1861.

". . . Last evening the Attorney-General was with me for a long time, till after midnight. I know from him what I cannot communicate. Suffice it to say, he does not think it probable — hardly possible — that we shall be here on the 4th of March. The President has been wrong again, and a scene has taken place which will be historic, but which I know in sacred confidence." — Sumner to Governor Andrew, January 28, 1861.

Also compare, *ante*, Chapters VI. and X., Vol. III., of this work

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of the mechanical questions was specially confided to Mr. Harding, this arrangement deprived Mr. Lincoln, and to his disappointment, of the opportunity of speaking before a prominent Court and a new and distinguished auditory. On the other hand we are distinctly informed by one of the clients in that suit that Mr. Lincoln was the junior counsel, and Mr. Stanton and Mr. Harding had made so much longer and more elaborate preparation that the clients themselves determined their selection to make the arguments; that, therefore, Mr. Lincoln's displacement arose from no unfairness of any one, but simply from the fact that the Court had limited the number of speakers.

"Harper's Monthly," June, 1884, p. 62.

Ralph Emerson to the Authors, March 12, 1887. MS.

When the new President was inaugurated, Stanton, and the other members of Buchanan's Administration, went into sudden eclipse. For months the public heard nothing from them, and in the mighty rush of events thought nothing about them. They evidently felt keenly the popular odium under which they disappeared for the moment, and were eager to magnify in their own extenuation every real or apparent shortcoming of their successors. In a series of confidential letters which did not become public till years after the war, from which we have elsewhere made quotations, we have an interesting record of Stanton's views and feelings. He watched the beginnings of the new Administration with an eye of unsparing fault-finding. It is clear that he had no high opinion of Mr. Lincoln, and no hope in the Republican party; worse than all, his faith in the ability of the Government to defend and maintain itself seems to have been seriously shaken, if not utterly gone. His com-

"North American Review," Nov., 1879, pp. 473–483.

ments on public events are couched in a tone of partisan bitterness. He thought Mr. Douglas's Senate resolution "a comprehensive platform for relinquishing everything in the seceded States." He predicted that "by the time that all the patronage is distributed the Republican party will be dissolved." He reported the impression, "that in less than thirty days Davis will be in possession of Washington." He repeated baseless street rumors of "the trepidation of Lincoln" and the "panic" of the Administration; complained of party action, "venality and corruption" of power, and "distrust in every department of the Government." As events culminated, his language grew stronger; he spoke of the "painful imbecility of Lincoln" with all the glibness of a country editor, and after the Bull Run defeat he thought a better state of things impossible "until Jefferson Davis turns out the whole concern." It would be uncharitable to insist on a literal criticism of these phrases. They must be judged in the light of Stanton's excited patriotism and impulsive vehemence of thought; also, it must be remembered that they were written for confidential, not public, inspection; and, more than all, that he wrote them without the full and accurate knowledge which was requisite to a proper judgment. He is certainly to be blamed for the harshness of his language and the recklessness of such assertions on the strength of street rumors. But, making allowance for the party prejudice and official soreness which inspired them, they assist in our interpretation of the larger capabilities and future usefulness of the man, under the domination and control of that unsleeping prudence and large-hearted charity

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Stanton to Dix, June 11, 1861. Dix, "Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 19. Stanton to Buchanan, July 26, 1861. "North American Review," Nov., 1879, p. 482.

CHAP. VIII. which characterized President Lincoln, who was able to transmute such a mine of energy to continuous regulated public service at a high pressure, and yet hold its excesses in check, temper its harshness, and ease its inevitable friction.

Stanton's nature was largely materialistic; his eye saw things in a simple, practical light; his mind dealt with them by rules of arithmetic. His knowledge of legal principles was governed by the same characteristic; hence his success in questions dealing with physical facts, land cases, and especially patent cases involving the examination of mechanical forces. This quality, arising mainly from strong instinctive perception, was coupled with another trait which gave it extraordinary power and value, namely, physical and mental energy. Above everything else he was a man of action. What in other men might be likened to the variable force of winds or wills, might be represented in him as the continuous, unremitting action of a steam-engine, able to furnish at every call any required pressure and speed for any period of duration. He had thus the qualities which made him a worker of workers. Method and organization were with him prime intuitions. He was impatient of delay and intolerant of neglect. Every thought and volition was positive. He was positive in his personal friendships, positive in his party convictions, positive in his judgments, positive to the last degree in his expressions. Yet these fundamental qualities were somewhat modified and restrained by his education and experience. In his profession he had learned "the uncertainties of the law." In politics he had witnessed the suddenness of popu-

lar transition, and the faithlessness of individuals to obligations of party and principle. His Cabinet experience had shown him how the apparently solid pillars of state might be undermined by concealed disaffection and treason. His judgment, therefore, tempered his instincts and restrained his impulses; it was doubtless this which made it possible for him to surrender sufficiently his party prejudices while yet a member of Buchanan's Cabinet, to confide in and advise with Republican leaders, and later to accept a Cabinet office from Lincoln, towards whom he had used such severe and unjust language. In a letter to Mr. Buchanan, dated March 1, 1862, he says: "My accession to my present position was quite as sudden and unexpected as the confidence you bestowed upon me in calling me to your Cabinet, and the responsible trust was accepted in both instances from the same motives, and will be executed with the same fidelity to the Constitution and laws."[1] In another letter, dated May 18, 1862, he wrote: "I hold my present post at the request of the President, who knew me personally, but to whom I had not spoken from the 4th of March, 1861, until the day he handed me my commission. I knew that everything I cherish and hold dear would be sacrificed by accepting office. But I thought I might help to save the country, and for that I was willing to perish." And six months later he again wrote: "In respect to the present position of affairs, all I can say is that the whole power of the Government is being put forth with more vigor, and I think more

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MS.

Stanton to Dyer, May 18, 1862. "Congressional Record," June 9, 1886, p. 5670.

[1] For a copy of this letter and other valuable manuscripts we are indebted to Lewis H. Stanton, son of the Secretary.

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earnestness, on the part of military commanders, than at any former period. Treason is encouraged in the Northern States by the just discontent of the people. But, believing our national destiny is as immediately in the hands of the Most High as ever was that of the Children of Israel, I am not only undismayed, but full of hope. For myself, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, serving no man, and at enmity with none, I shall strive to perform my whole duty in the great work before us. Mistakes and faults I no doubt may commit, but the purpose of my actions shall be single to the public good."

Stanton to Dyer, Nov. 18, 1862. "Congressional Record," June 18, 1886.

These extracts evidently present a true statement of Stanton's feeling. He accepted his appointment in both instances, not as a party or official retainer, but as a call to a citizen's duty; and in both cases he sought to make his service consistent, not with party profession, but with patriotic obligation. "Fidelity to the Constitution and laws" required him under Buchanan to do everything in his power to thwart the conspiracy in which his colleagues Cobb, Thompson, and Floyd were engaged; and the same principle bound him under Lincoln to use every agency he could control to suppress rebellion and reëstablish the national authority. In this mood he began his duties as Lincoln's War Secretary, and in a daily official intercourse of more than three years rendered his great chief a steady personal service and devotion of which he probably little dreamed when, in the summer of 1861, he was so ignorantly writing of the "painful imbecility of Lincoln." Now he could better measure the President's intellectual

strength, and observe his unselfish patriotism. Neither of the men had an easy task to perform. It was a relation calculated to curb any light promptings of vanity or self-sufficiency; and for his own immense responsibilities the Secretary of War had frequent need of the indulgence of the Executive. From first to last there was between them substantial unity of aim, coöperation in effort, confidence in word and act. Stanton joined heartily in all the great military and political measures of the Administration: ample calls for troops, liberal bounties, the desire for vigorous, offensive campaigns, promotion for merit, emancipation, the draft, the organization and protection of colored troops, and the amendment of the Constitution to abolish slavery. His advice was always intelligent, consistent, and steady; his decisions were rapid and generally judicious and permanent. In Cabinet discussions he was forcible rather than brilliant, ready with fact and law, and, though not dogmatic, always decided. As natural with two strong minds, they sometimes differed in their estimates of men or advisability of measures, but never in principle or object. CHAP. VIII.

The relation of Mr. Lincoln to the members of his Cabinet was one of unusual frankness and cordiality. The President was gifted by nature with a courtesy far excelling the conventionalities of an acquired politeness. With a delicacy which has rarely been equaled, he respected not merely their official authority but also their sentiments, their judgments, their manhood. Though differing widely from him in personal qualities, they returned his courtesy and kindness as a rule with warm

CHAP. VIII. friendship, and none of them more sincerely than Mr. Stanton. The President found support in the outspoken counsel and robust energy of his war minister; the Secretary yielded trustfully to the superior sagacity and authority of the President. Lincoln began by giving his new Secretary that full discretion which his selection properly implied, and which the vast and responsible duties expected of him unavoidably demanded. It may safely be asserted that Stanton employed this trust with high patriotic aspiration. In comparison with the general correctness of his judgment and the value of his advice and action, his few mistakes which might be pointed out become trivial. The occasional exhibitions of temper and brusqueness of manner which have been observed in him, are chargeable to the harassing perplexity of his duties; naturally he was genial and kind, and his words often evinced a deep tenderness of feeling. As he did not spare his own health and strength in the public service by day or by night, so he required from every subordinate, whether a general or a private, whether in Washington or in the farthest camp, unremitting activity, devotion, sacrifice. Both the War Department and the army instantly felt the quickening influence of his rare organizing power, combined with a will which nothing but unquestioning obedience would satisfy. He insisted rigidly upon military system, discipline, and duty. There was indeed urgent need for their enforcement. The hundreds of thousands of civilians suddenly called to arms as soldiers or officers did not take kindly to the subordination and restraints of the camp. The flood of promotions which at-

tended the organization of brigades and divisions produced an unhealthy rivalry in all grades of command, showering Congress, the War Department, and the Executive Mansion with applications. The evil of officers' furloughs to come to Washington to further their promotions became so great as to excite the wit of the newspapers. "The other day," ran a paragraph, "a boy threw a stone at a dog on Pennsylvania Avenue and hit three Brigadier-Generals." CHAP. VIII.

Stanton took hold of such abuses with an energetic hand. He banished self-seeking "shoulder-straps" from the capital. He centered the telegraph in the War Department, where the publication of military news, which might prematurely reach the enemy, could be supervised, and, if necessary, delayed. He expanded and vivified his various military bureaus. He found some Congressmen, like some contractors, misrepresenting his peremptory refusals of the special favors they arrogantly demanded; to correct this abuse, he for a period stood every day at a stated hour beside a tall desk in one of the rooms of the War Department, where he compelled each applicant or interviewer, high or low, to state his request publicly and audibly in presence of the assembled throng, so that the stenographer at his elbow could record it as well as the Secretary's answer, and verbal solicitations and personal interviews diminished suddenly under this staring publicity. It was Stanton's habit to go personally with news or official papers to the Executive Mansion, informally, at all hours; it was Lincoln's practice to go as informally to Stanton's office at the War Department, and in times of great

CHAP. VIII. suspense, during impending or actual battles, to spend hour after hour with his War Secretary, where he could read the telegrams as fast as they were received and handed in from the adjoining room. Under such conditions there grew up between them an intimacy in which the mind and heart of each were given without reserve to the great work in which they bore such conspicuous parts. When the time for Mr. Lincoln's reëlection came, no man desired or labored for it more earnestly than Edwin M. Stanton, while no one appreciated more clearly or valued more highly than President Lincoln the splendid abilities and services of his Secretary of War.

The anecdotes of his occasional blunt disregard of the President's expressed wishes are either untrue or are half-truths that lead to erroneous conclusions, and originated probably in a certain roughness of Stanton's manner under strong irritation. Lincoln never magnified trifles; Stanton seldom neglected a plain duty. Nevertheless, in the multifarious details of their daily labors they sometimes found each other at cross-purpose in regard to some minor and relatively unimportant matter. Stanton, carrying out the great operations of the War Department, in which system and order were essential, was predisposed to insist upon adherence to established rules. Lincoln, on the other hand, governing the greater machine of administration, which included the temper and drift of public opinion equally with the rules and articles of war, was by nature as well as by reason constantly moved, not merely to the pardoning power with which he was specially invested by the Con-

stitution, but also to that unwritten dispensing authority enfolded within the broad scope of Executive discretion, and was prone to temper the harsh accidents of civil war by a generous and liberal construction of law and duty. It is quite possible that Stanton thought the President too ready to yield to the hundreds of personal petitions which besieged him for clemency or relief, and we have the written evidence that in the following case at least (though we believe the authentic instances are rare), the President's written direction was neglected by his Secretary until reminded of his proper duty by this note from Mr. Lincoln: CHAP. VIII.

"A poor widow, by the name of Baird, has a son in the army, that for some offense has been sentenced to serve a long time without pay, or at most with very little pay. I do not like this punishment of withholding pay — it falls so very hard upon poor families. After he had been serving in this way for several months, at the tearful appeal of the poor mother, I made a direction that he be allowed to enlist for a new term, on the same conditions as others. She now comes, and says she cannot get it acted upon. Please do it." Stanton had his warm-hearted as well as his hot-tempered and stubborn moods, and it is not likely, after this patient explanation, that he hesitated an instant to carry out the President's request. The strong will of Stanton met in Lincoln a still stronger personality, which governed not merely by higher legal authority, but by the manifestation of a greater soul and a clearer insight justifying his decisions with a convincing logic. To show how effectively and

Lincoln to Stanton, March 1, 1864. MS.

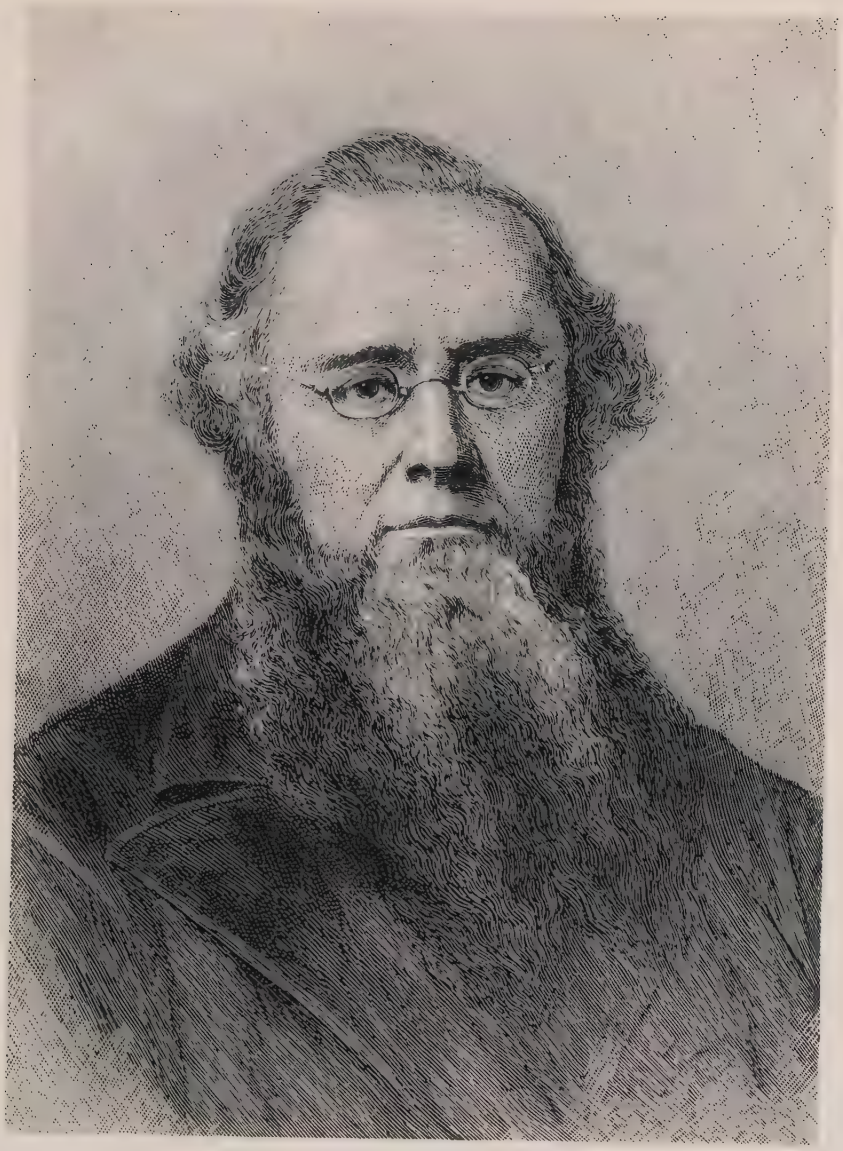
CHAP. VIII. yet how prudently the President wielded this weapon, we quote another letter written by him upon a kindred class of topics:

"I am so pressed in regard to prisoners of war in our custody, whose homes are within our lines and who wish to not be exchanged, but to take the oath and be discharged, that I hope you will pardon me for again calling up the subject. My impression is that we will not ever force the exchange of any of this class; that, taking the oath and being discharged, none of them will again go to the rebellion; but the rebellion again coming to them, a considerable percentage of them, probably not a majority, would rejoin it; that by a cautious discrimination, the number so discharged would not be large enough to do any considerable mischief in any event, would relieve distress in at least some meritorious cases, and would give me some relief from an intolerable pressure. I shall be glad, therefore, to have your cheerful assent to the discharge of those whose names I may send, which I will only do with circumspection." In answer to the above letter, Stanton, on the next day, wrote: "Mr. President: Your order for the discharge of any prisoners of war will be cheerfully and promptly obeyed."

Lincoln to Stanton, March 18, 1864. MS.

Stanton to Lincoln, March 19. 1864. MS.

As Lincoln thus always treated Stanton, not as a department clerk, but with the respect and consideration due a Cabinet minister, questions of difference rarely came to a head. There were very few instances in which they ever became sufficiently defined to leave a written record. One such was when the President ordered Franklin's division to join McClellan, against Stanton's desire that it should be kept with McDowell's army moving by



Edwin M. Stanton

land to cover Washington. Another when Stanton with several other members of the Cabinet signed a protest against McClellan's being placed in command of the Army of the Potomac after Pope's defeat in Virginia. In this instance these Cabinet signers had the good sense not to send their protest to Mr. Lincoln. Still a third when Stanton made an order giving Bishop Ames control of the Methodist churches which had fallen into our hands in the South, in plain violation of a prior letter from the President that the Government must not "undertake to run the churches." In these and similar cases Stanton yielded readily. One authentic case remains where the trial of will between the two men was brought to the point of a sharper issue. It is related by General James B. Fry, who witnessed the scene. Its beginning is sufficiently stated in the following order, made by Lincoln on September 1, 1864: CHAP. VIII.

It is represented to me that there are at Rock Island, Illinois, as rebel prisoners of war, many persons of Northern and foreign birth who are unwilling to be exchanged and sent South, but who wish to take the oath of allegiance and enter the military service of the Union. Colonel Huidekoper, on behalf of the people of some parts of Pennsylvania, wishes to pay the bounties the Government would have to pay to proper persons of this class, have them enter the service of the United States, and be credited to the localities furnishing the bounty money. He will therefore proceed to Rock Island, ascertain the names of such persons (not including any who have attractions Southward), and telegraph them to the Provost-Marshal-General here, whereupon direction will be given to discharge the persons named upon their taking the oath of allegiance; and upon the official evidence being furnished that they shall have been duly received

CHAP. VIII. and mustered into the service of the United States, their number will be credited as may be directed by Colonel
MS. Huidekoper.

From what followed we may be certain that the President did not understand the full scope and effect of the order, and when Stanton learned all the circumstances he refused to carry it out, and upon Lincoln's reiterating it, refused a second time. General Fry, who was the provost-marshal-general having special charge of such questions, thus continues his narrative:

Then Lincoln went in person to Stanton's office, and I was called there by the latter to state the facts in the case. I reported to the two high officials, as I had previously done to the Secretary alone, that these men already belonged to the United States, being prisoners of war; that they could not be used against the Confederates; that they had no relation whatever to the county to which it was proposed they should be credited; that all that was necessary towards enlisting them in our army for Indian service was the Government's release of them as prisoners of war; that to give them bounty and credit them to a county which owed some of its own men for service against the Confederates would waste money and deprive the army operating against a powerful enemy of that number of men, etc. Stanton said: "Now, Mr. President, those are the facts, and you must see that your order cannot be executed." Lincoln sat upon a sofa with his legs crossed, and did not say a word until the Secretary's last remark. Then he said, in a somewhat positive tone: "Mr. Secretary, I reckon you 'll have to execute the order." Stanton replied with asperity: "Mr. President, I cannot do it. The order is an improper one, and I cannot execute it." Lincoln fixed his eye upon Stanton, and in a firm voice, and with an accent that clearly showed his determination, he said: "Mr. Secretary, it will have to be done." Stanton then realized that he was overmatched. He had made a

square issue with the President and been defeated, notwithstanding the fact that he was in the right. Upon an intimation from him I withdrew and did not witness his surrender. A few minutes after I reached my office I received instructions from the Secretary to carry out the President's order.

James B. Fry, New York "Tribune," June 28, 1885.

It must not be assumed from the termination of the above incident that Mr. Lincoln wished either to humiliate the Secretary of War or compel him to violate his convictions of duty. In the interim between General Fry's withdrawal from the room and the Secretary's acquiescence Lincoln had doubtless explained to Stanton, with that irresistible frankness and kindness with which he carried all his points of controversy, the reasons for his insistence, which he immediately further put upon record for the Secretary's justification in the following letter to General Grant, dated September 22, 1864: "I send this as an explanation to you, and to do justice to the Secretary of War. I was induced, upon pressing applications, to authorize agents of one of the districts of Pennsylvania to recruit in one of the prison depots in Illinois; and the thing went so far before it came to the knowledge of the Secretary that, in my judgment, it could not be abandoned without greater evil than would follow its going through. I did not know at the time that you had protested against that class of thing being done; and I now say that while this particular job must be completed, no other of the sort will be authorized, without an understanding with you, if at all. The Secretary of War is wholly free of any part in this blunder."

Lincoln to Grant, Sept. 22, 1864. MS.

CHAPTER IX

PLANS OF CAMPAIGN

ABOUT the 1st of December, 1861, Mr. Lincoln, who saw more clearly than McClellan, then general-in-chief, the urgent necessity for some movement of the army, suggested to him a plan of campaign which, afterwards much debated and discussed and finally rejected, is now seen to have been eminently wise and sagacious. He made a brief autograph memorandum of his plan, which he handed to McClellan, who kept it for ten days and returned it to Mr. Lincoln with a hurried memorandum in pencil, showing that it made little impression on his mind. The memorandum and answer are so illustrative of the two men that we give them here in full, copied from the original manuscript:

If it were determined to make a forward movement of the Army of the Potomac, without awaiting further increase of numbers or better drill and discipline, how long would it require to actually get in motion? — [Answer, in pencil:] If bridge-trains ready, by December 15th — probably 25th.

After leaving all that would be necessary, how many troops could join the movement from southwest of the river? — [In pencil,] 71,000.

How many from northeast of it? — [In pencil,] 33,000.

Suppose then that of those southwest of the river — [in pencil,] 50,000 — move forward and menace the enemy at Centreville? the remainder of the movable force on that side move rapidly to the crossing of the Occoquan by the road from Alexandria towards Richmond; there to be joined by the whole movable force from northeast of the river, having landed from the Potomac just below the mouth of the Occoquan, moved by land up the south side of that stream, to the crossing-point named; then the whole move together, by the road thence to Brentville, and beyond, to the railroad just south of its crossing of Broad Run, a strong detachment of cavalry having gone rapidly ahead to destroy the railroad bridges south and north of the point.

If the crossing of the Occoquan by those from above be resisted, those landing from the Potomac below to take the resisting force of the enemy in rear; or, if the landing from the Potomac be resisted, those crossing the Occoquan from above to take that resisting force in rear. Both points will probably not be successfully resisted at the same time. The force in front of Centreville, if pressed too hardly, should fight back slowly into the intrenchments behind them. Armed vessels and transportation should remain at the Potomac landing to cover a possible retreat.

Lincoln to McClellan, Autograph MS.

General McClellan returned the memorandum with this reply:

I inclose the paper you left with me, filled as you requested. In arriving at the numbers given, I have left the minimum number in garrison and observation.

Information received recently leads me to believe that the enemy could meet us in front with equal forces nearly, and I have now my mind actively turned towards another plan of campaign that I do not think at all anticipated by the enemy, nor by many of our own people.

McClellan to Lincoln, Dec. 10, 1861. Autograph MS.

The general's information was, as usual, erroneous. Johnston reports his "effective total"

CHAP. IX. at this time as about 47,000 men — less than one-third what McClellan imagined it. Lincoln, however, did not insist upon knowing what the general's "other plan" was; nor did he press further upon his attention the suggestion that had been so scantily considered and so curtly dismissed. But as the weeks went by in inaction, his thoughts naturally dwelt upon the opportunities afforded by an attack on the enemy's right, and the project took more and more definite shape in his mind.

1861 Congress convened on the 2d of December, and one of its earliest subjects of discussion was the battle of Ball's Bluff. Roscoe Conkling in the House of Representatives, and Zachariah Chandler in the Senate, brought forward resolutions for the appointment of committees to investigate and determine the responsibility for that disaster; but, on motion of Grimes of Iowa, the Senate chose to order a permanent joint committee of three Senators and four Representatives to inquire into the conduct of the war. This action was unanimously agreed to by the House, and the committee was appointed, consisting of Senators B. F. Wade, Chandler, and Andrew Johnson, and of Representatives Gooch, Covode, Julian, and Odell. This committee, known as the Committee on the Conduct of the War, was for four years one of the most important agencies in the country. It assumed, and was sustained by Congress in assuming, a great range of prerogative. It became a stern and zealous censor of both the army and the Government; it called soldiers and statesmen before it, and questioned them like refractory schoolboys. It

claimed to speak for the loyal people of the United States, and this claim generally met with the sympathy and support of a majority of the people's representatives in Congress assembled. It was often hasty and unjust in its judgments, but always earnest, patriotic, and honest; it was assailed with furious denunciation and defended with headlong and indiscriminating eulogy; and on the whole it must be said to have merited more praise than blame. CHAP. IX.

Even before this committee was appointed, as we have seen, Senators Chandler and Wade, representing the more ardent and eager spirits in Congress, had repeatedly pressed upon the Government the necessity of employing the Army of the Potomac in active operations; and now that they felt themselves formally intrusted with a mandate from the people to that effect, were still more urgent and persistent. General McClellan and his immediate following treated the committee with something like contempt. But the President, with his larger comprehension of popular forces, knew that he must take into account an agency of such importance; and though he steadily defended General McClellan and his deliberateness of preparation before the committee, he constantly assured him in private that not a moment ought to be lost in getting himself in readiness for a forward movement. A free people, accustomed to considering public affairs as their own, can stand reverses and disappointments; they are capable of making great exertions and great sacrifices. The one thing that they cannot endure is inaction on the part of their rulers; the one thing that they insist upon is to see some

CHAP. IX. result of their exertions and sacrifices. December was the fifth month that General McClellan had been in command of the greatest army ever brought together on this continent. It was impossible to convince the country that a longer period of preparation was necessary before this army could be led against one inferior in numbers, and not superior in discipline or equipment. As a matter of fact, the country did not believe the rebel army to be equal to the army of the Union in any of these particulars. It did not share the delusion of General McClellan and his staff in regard to the numbers of his adversary, and the common sense of the people was nearer right in its judgment than the computations of the general and his inefficient secret service. McClellan reported to the Secretary of War that Johnston's army, at the end of October, numbered 150,000, and that he would therefore require, to make an advance movement with the Army of the Potomac, a force of 240,000. Johnston's report of that date shows an effective total of 41,000 men. It was useless to try to convince General McClellan of the impossibility of such a concentration of troops in front of him; he simply added together the aggregates furnished by the guesses of his spies and implicitly believed the monstrous sum. It is worthy of notice that the Confederate general rarely fell into the corresponding error. At the time that McClellan was quadrupling, in his imagination, the rebel force, Johnston was estimating the army under McClellan at exactly its real strength.

W. R. Vol. V., pp. 9, 10. Johnston, "Narrative of Military Operations," p. 81.

1861.

Johnston, "Narrative of Military Operations," p. 81.

Aware that his army was less than one-third as strong as the Union forces, Johnston contented

himself with neutralizing the army at Washington, passing the time in drilling and disciplining his troops, who, according to his own account, were seriously in need of it. He could not account for the inactivity of the Union army. Military operations, he says, were practicable until the end of December; but he was never molested. "Our military exercises had never been interrupted. No demonstrations were made by the troops of that army, except the occasional driving in of a Confederate cavalry picket by a large mixed force. The Federal cavalry rarely ventured beyond the protection of infantry, and the ground between the two armies had been less free to it than to that of the Confederate army." CHAP. IX. Johnston, "Narrative of Military Operations," p. 84.

There was at no time any serious thought of attacking the Union forces in front of Washington. In the latter part of September (Sept. 30), General Johnston had thought it possible for the Richmond Government to give him such additional troops as to enable him to take the offensive, and Jefferson Davis had come to headquarters at Fairfax Court House to confer with the leading commanders on that subject. At this conference, held on the 1st of October, it was taken for granted that no attack could be made, with any chance of success, upon the Union army in its position before Washington; but it was thought that, if enough force could be concentrated for the purpose, the Potomac might be crossed at the nearest ford, Maryland brought into rebellion, and a battle delivered in the rear of Washington, where McClellan would fight at a disadvantage. Mr. Davis asked the three generals present, Johnston, Beauregard, and G. W. Smith, 1861.

CHAP. IX. beginning with the last, how many troops would be required for such a movement. Smith answered "fifty thousand"; Johnston and Beauregard both said "sixty thousand"; and all agreed that they would require a large increase of ammunition and means of transportation. Mr. Davis said it was impossible to reënforce them to that extent, and the plan was dropped.

Johnston, "Narrative of Military Operations," p. 76.

It is hard to believe that during this same month of October, General McClellan, in a careful letter to the War Department, with an army, according to his own account, of "147,695 present for duty," should have bewailed his numerical inferiority to the enemy, and begged that all other departments should be stripped of their troops and stores to enable him to make a forward movement, which he professed himself anxious to make not later than the 25th of November, if the Government would give him men enough to meet the enemy on equal terms. This singular infatuation, difficult to understand in a man of high intelligence and physically brave, as McClellan undoubtedly was, must not be lost sight of. It furnishes the sole explanation of many things otherwise inexplicable. He rarely estimated the force immediately opposed to him at less than double its actual strength, and in his correspondence with the Government he persistently minimized his own force. This rule he applied only to the enemy in his immediate vicinity. He had no sympathy with commanders at a distance who asked for reënforcements. When Rosecrans succeeded him in Western Virginia, and wanted additional troops, General McClellan was shocked at the unreasonable request. When Buell informed

W. R. Vol. V., p. 9.

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him that W. T. Sherman insisted that two hundred thousand men were needed in the West, he handed the letter to Mr. Lincoln, who was sitting in his headquarters at the moment, with the remark, "The man is crazy." Every man sent to any other department he regarded as a sort of robbery of the Army of the Potomac. CHAP. IX. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 444.

All his demands were complied with to the full extent of the power of the Government. Not only in a material but in a moral sense as well, the President gave him everything that he could. In addition to that mighty army, he gave him his fullest confidence and support. All through the autumn he stood by him, urging him in private to lose no time, but defending him in public against the popular impatience; and when winter came on, and the voice of Congress, nearly unanimous in demanding active operations, added its authoritative tones to the clamor of the country, the President endangered his own popularity by insisting that the general should be allowed to take his time for an advance.

In the latter part of December, McClellan, as already stated, fell seriously ill, and the enforced paralysis of the army that resulted from this illness and lasted several weeks, added a keener edge to the public anxiety. The President painfully appreciated how much of justice there was in the general criticism, which he was doing all that he could to allay. He gave himself, night and day, to the study of the military situation. He read a large number of strategical works. He pored over the reports from the various departments and districts of the field of war. He held long conferences with 1861.

CHAP. IX. eminent generals and admirals, and astonished them by the extent of his special knowledge and the keen intelligence of his questions. He at last convinced himself that there was no necessity for any further delay; that the Army of the Potomac was as nearly ready as it ever would be to take the field against the enemy; and, feeling that he could

1862. not wait any longer, on the 10th of January, after calling at General McClellan's house and learning that the general was unable to see him, he sent for Generals McDowell and Franklin, wishing to take counsel with them in regard to the possibility of beginning active operations with the army before Washington. General McDowell has preserved an accurate report of this conference. The President said that he was in great distress; to use his own expression: "If something were not soon done, the bottom would be out of the whole affair; and if General McClellan did not want to use the army he would like to borrow it, provided he could see how it could be made to do something."

Raymond, "Life of Lincoln," p. 773.

In answer to a direct question put by the President to General McDowell, that accomplished soldier gave a frank and straightforward expression of his conviction that by an energetic movement upon both flanks of the enemy — a movement rendered entirely practicable by the superior numbers of the Union army — he could be forced from his works and compelled to accept battle on terms favorable to us. General Franklin rather favored an attack upon Richmond by way of York River. A question arising as to the possibility of obtaining the necessary transportation, the President directed both generals to return the next even-

ing, and in the mean time to inform themselves thoroughly as to the matter in question. They spent the following day in this duty, and went the next evening to the Executive Mansion with what information they had been able to procure, and submitted a paper in which they both agreed that, in view of the time and means required to take the army to a distant base, operations could now best be undertaken from the present base, substantially as proposed by McDowell. The Secretaries of State and of the Treasury, who were present, coincided in this view, and the Postmaster-General, Mr. Blair, alone opposed it. They separated to meet the next day at three o'clock. General Meigs, having been called into conference, concurred in the opinion that a movement from the present base was preferable; but no definite resolution was taken, as General McClellan was reported as fully recovered from his illness, and another meeting was arranged for Monday, the 13th, at the White House, where the three members of the Cabinet already mentioned, with McDowell, Franklin, Meigs, and General McClellan himself, were present. CHAP. IX.

At the request of the President, McDowell made a statement of what he and Franklin had done under Mr. Lincoln's orders, and gave his reasons for advising a movement to the front. He spoke with great courtesy and deference towards his superior officer, and made an apology for the position in which he stood. McClellan was not inclined to relieve the situation of any awkwardness there might be in it. He merely said, "coldly, if not curtly," to McDowell, "You are entitled to have any opinion you please," and made no further re-

CHAP. IX. mark or comment. The President spoke somewhat at length on the matter, and General McClellan said very briefly that "the case was so clear a blind man could see it," and went off instinctively upon the inadequacy of his forces. The Secretary of the Treasury, whose sympathies were with that section of his party which had already lost all confidence in General McClellan, asked him point-blank what he intended to do with the army and when he intended doing it. A long silence ensued. Even if the question had been a proper one, it is doubtful whether General McClellan would have answered it; under the circumstances, it must have required some self-control for him to have contented himself with merely evading it. He said that Buell, in Kentucky, must move first; and then refused to answer the question unless ordered to do so. The President asked him if he counted upon any particular time, not asking what the time was — but had he in his own mind any particular time fixed when a movement could be begun? This question was evidently put as affording a means of closing a conference which was becoming disagreeable if not dangerous. McClellan promptly answered in the affirmative, and the President rejoined, "Then I will adjourn this meeting."

It is a remarkable fact that although the plan recommended by these generals was exactly the plan suggested six weeks before by the President to McClellan, neither of them made the slightest reference to that incident. That Mr. Lincoln did not refer to a matter so close to his heart is a striking instance of his reticence and his magnanimity; that General McClellan never mentioned it would

seem to show that he thought so little of the matter as to have forgotten it. He seemed also to have thought little of this conference; he makes no reference to it in his report. He says, referring to this period: "About the middle of January, 1862, upon recovering from a severe illness, I found that excessive anxiety for an immediate movement of the Army of the Potomac had taken possession of the minds of the Administration."

The last words of the phrase refer not only to the President, but to Mr. Stanton, the new Secretary of War, who began as soon as he took charge of his department to ply the commander of the army with continual incitements to activity. All suggestions of this sort, whether coming from the Government, Congress, or the press, General McClellan received with surprise and displeasure; and the resentment and vexation of his immediate friends and associates found vent in expressions of contempt for unmilitary critics, which, being reported, only increased the evil that provoked them. He at last laid before the President his plan for attacking Richmond by the lower Chesapeake, which the President disapproved, having previously convinced himself of the superior merit of the plan for a direct movement agreed upon by Generals McDowell, Franklin, and Meigs, who were ignorant of the fact that it was his. Further delay ensued, the President not being willing to accept a plan condemned by his own judgment and by the best professional opinion that he could obtain, and General McClellan being equally reluctant to adopt a plan that was not his own.

The President at last, at the end of his patience,

CHAP. IX. convinced that nothing would be done unless he intervened by a positive command, issued on the
1862. 27th of January his "General War Order, No. 1." He wrote it without consultation with any one, and read it to the Cabinet, not for their sanction, but for their information. The order directed "that the 22d day of February, 1862, be the day for a general movement of the land and naval forces of the United States against the insurgent forces; that especially the army at and about Fortress Monroe, the Army of the Potomac, the Army of Western Virginia, the army near Munfordville, Kentucky, the army and flotilla at Cairo, and a naval force in the Gulf of Mexico, be ready to move on that day; that all other forces, both land and naval, with their respective commanders, obey existing orders for the time, and be ready to obey additional orders when duly given; that the heads of departments, and especially the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, with all their subordinates, and the General-in-Chief, with all other commanders and subordinates of land and naval forces, will severally be held to their strict and full responsibilities for prompt execution of this order."

Lincoln, Order, Jan. 27, 1862. W. R. Vol. V., p. 41.

Four days later, as a necessary result of this general summons to action, a special instruction, called "President's Special War Order, No 1," was issued to General McClellan, commanding "that all the disposable force of the Army of the Potomac, after providing safely for the defense of Washington, be formed into an expedition for the immediate object of seizing and occupying a point upon the railroad southwestward of what is known as Manassas Junction, all details to be in the discretion of the

Ibid., Jan. 31, 1862. W. R. Vol. V., p. 41.

D. C. Buell

Commander-in-Chief, and the expedition to move before or on the 22d day of February next." This is the President's suggestion of December 1, put at last in the form of a command.

It would not have been characteristic of General McClellan to accept such an order as final, nor of Mr. Lincoln to refuse to listen to his objections and to a full statement of his own views. The President even went so far as to give him, in the following note, dated February 3, a schedule of points on which he might base his objections and develop his views.

MY DEAR SIR: You and I have distinct and different plans for a movement of the Army of the Potomac — yours to be down the Chesapeake, up the Rappahannock to Urbana, and across land to the terminus of the railroad on the York River; mine to move directly to a point on the railroads southwest of Manassas.

If you will give me satisfactory answers to the following questions, I shall gladly yield my plan to yours:

First. Does not your plan involve a greatly larger expenditure of time and money than mine?

Second. Wherein is a victory more certain by your plan than mine?

Third. Wherein is a victory more valuable by your plan than mine?

Fourth. In fact, would it not be less valuable in this, that it would break no great line of the enemy's communications, while mine would?

Fifth. In case of disaster, would not a retreat be more difficult by your plan than mine?

Lincoln to McClellan, Feb. 3, 1862. W. R. Vol. V., pp. 41, 42. See also Memorandum. W. R. Vol. V., p. 713.

This elicited from General McClellan a long letter, dated the same day, in which he dwelt with great emphasis on all the possible objections that could lie against a direct movement from Washington, and insisted with equal energy upon the

CHAP. IX. advantages of a campaign by the lower Chesapeake. He rejects without argument the suggestion of an attack on both flanks of the enemy, on the ground of insufficient force — a ground that we have seen to be visionary. He says that an attack on the left flank of the enemy is impracticable on account of the length of the line, and confines his statement to a detail of the dangers and difficulties of an attack on the Confederate right by the line of the Occoquan. He insists that he will be met at every point by a determined resistance. To use his own words, he "brings out, in bold relief, the great advantage possessed by the enemy in the strong central position he occupies, with roads diverging in every direction, and a strong line of defense enabling him to remain on the defensive, with a small force on one flank, while he concentrates everything on the other for a decisive action." Even if he succeeded in such a movement, he thought little of its results; they would be merely "the possession of the field of battle, the evacuation of the line of the upper Potomac by the enemy, and the moral effect of the victory."

They would not end the war — the result he seemed to propose to himself in the one decisive battle he expected to fight somewhere. Turning to his own plan, he hoped by moving from his new base on the lower Chesapeake to accomplish this enormous and final success — to force the enemy either "to beat us in a position selected by ourselves, disperse, or pass beneath the Caudine forks." The point which he thought promised the most brilliant results was Urbana, on the lower Rappahannock; "but one march from West Point [on the York River, at

the junction of the Pamunkey and Mattapony], the key of that region, and thence but two marches to Richmond." He enjoys the prospect of brilliant and rapid movements, by which the rebel armies shall be cut off in detail, Richmond taken, and the rebellion brought to a close. He says finally: "My judgment as a general is clearly in favor of this project. . . So much am I in favor of the Southern line of operation, that I would prefer the move from Fortress Monroe as a base — as a certain though less brilliant movement than that from Urbana — to an attack upon Manassas." CHAP. IX. W. R. Vol. V., pp. 42-45.

Most of the assumptions upon which this letter was based have since proved erroneous. The force which McClellan ascribed to Johnston existed only in his imagination and in the wild stories of his spies. His force was about three times that of Johnston, and was therefore not insufficient for an attack upon one flank of the enemy while the other was held in check. It is now clearly known that the determined resistance that he counted upon, if he should attack by the line of the Occoquan, would not have been made. General Johnston says that about the middle of February he was sent for in great haste to Richmond, and on arriving there was told by Jefferson Davis that the Government thought of withdrawing the army to "a less exposed position." Johnston replied that the withdrawal of the army from Centreville would be necessary before McClellan's invasion,— which was to be looked for as soon as the roads were practicable,— but thought that it might be postponed for the present. He left Richmond, however, with the understanding on his part that the army was to fall back as Johnston, "Narrative of Military Operations," p. 96.

CHAP. IX. soon as practicable, and the moment he returned to his camp he began his preparations to retire at once from a position which both he and the Richmond Government considered absolutely untenable. On
1862. the 22d of February, Johnston says, "Orders were given to the chiefs of the quartermaster's and subsistence departments to remove the military property in the depots at Manassas Junction and its dependencies to Gordonsville as quickly as possible." The railroads were urged to work to their utmost capacity. The line of the Occoquan, against which McClellan was arguing so strenuously to the President, was substantially the route by which Johnston expected him, believing, like the thorough soldier that he was, that it would be taken, because "invasion by that route would be the most difficult to meet"; and knowing that he could not cope with the Federal army north of the Rappahannock, he was ready to retire behind that stream at the first news of McClellan's advance.

Everything now indicates that if McClellan had chosen to obey the President's order and to move upon the enemy in his front in the latter part of
1862. February[1] or the first days of March, one of the

[1] The following extract shows that General McClellan himself had some vague thought of moving at that time: "February came, and on the 13th General McClellan said to me, 'In ten days I shall be in Richmond.' A little surprised at the near approach of a consummation so devoutly to be wished, I asked, 'What is your plan, General?' 'Oh,' said he, 'I mean to cross the river, attack and carry their batteries, and push on after the enemy.' 'Have you any gunboats to aid in the attack on the batteries?' 'No, they are not needed; all I want is transportation and canal-boats, of which I have plenty that will answer.' I did not think it worth while to reply; but made a note of the date and waited. The ten days passed away; no movement, and no preparation for a movement, had been made."— From a memorandum written by Secretary Chase. Schuckers, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 446.

cheapest victories ever gained by a fortunate general awaited him. He would have struck an enemy greatly inferior in strength, equipment, and discipline, in the midst of a difficult retreat already begun, encumbered by a vast accumulation of provisions and stores,[1] which would have become the prize of the victor. He would not have won the battle that was to end the war. That sole battle was a dream of youth and ambition; the war was not of a size to be finished by one fight. But he would have gained, at slight cost, what would have been in reality a substantial success, and would have appeared, in its effect upon public opinion and the morale of the army, an achievement of great importance. The enemy, instead of quietly retiring at his own time, would have seemed to be driven beyond the Rapidan. The clearing the Potomac of hostile camps and batteries above and below Washington, and the capture of millions of pounds of stores, would have afforded a relief to the anxious public mind that the National cause sorely needed at that time, and which General McClellan needed most of all.[2]

[1] The subsistence department had collected at Manassas Junction more than three million pounds of provisions. They had also two million pounds of meat at Thoroughfare Gap, besides large herds of cattle and hogs. This accumulation was against the wish and to the great embarrassment of General Johnston.—Johnston, "Narrative of Military Operations," pp. 98 and 99.

[2] Mr. William Swinton, who habitually takes sides with McClellan against the President where it is possible, says on this point: "Had Johnston stood, a battle with good prospect of success might have been delivered. But had he, as there was great likelihood he would do, and as it is now certain he would have done, fallen back from Manassas to the line of the Rapidan his compulsory retirement would have been esteemed a positive victory to the Union arms."—Swinton, "Army of the Potomac," p. 73.

CHAP. IX. These facts, that are now so clear to every one, were not so evident then; and although the President and the leading men in the Government and in Congress were strongly of the opinion that the plan favored by Mr. Lincoln and approved by McDowell, Meigs, and Franklin was the right one, it was a question of the utmost gravity whether he should force the General-in-Chief to adopt it against his obstinate protest. It would be too much to ask that any government should assume such a responsibility and risk. On the other hand, the removal of the general from the command of the Army of the Potomac would have been a measure not less serious. There was no successor ready who was his equal in accomplishments, in executive efficiency, or in popularity among the soldiers. Besides this, and in spite of his exasperating slowness, the President still entertained for him a strong feeling of personal regard. He therefore, after much deliberation and deep distress of mind, yielded his convictions, gave up his plan, and adopted that of General McClellan for a movement by the lower Chesapeake. He never took a resolution which cost him more in his own feelings and in the estimation of his supporters in Congress and in the country at large. He made no explanation of the reasons that induced this resolution; he thought it better to suffer any misrepresentation rather than to communicate his own grave misgivings to the country. The Committee on the Conduct of the War, who were profoundly grieved and displeased by this decision, made only this grim reference to it: "Your committee have no evidence, either oral or documentary, of the discussions that

ensued, or of the arguments that were submitted to the consideration of the President, that led him to relinquish his own line of operations and consent to the one proposed by General McClellan, except the result of a council of war held in February, 1862." CHAP. IX. Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. Part I., p. 10.

This council, which, the committee say, was the first ever called by McClellan, and then only at the direction of the President, was composed of twelve general officers — McDowell, Sumner, Heintzelman, Barnard, Keyes, Fitz-John Porter, Franklin, W. F. Smith, McCall, Blenker, Andrew Porter, and Naglee of Hooker's division. The first four voted against the Urbana plan; Keyes only favored it on condition that the Potomac batteries should first be reduced. The rest voted for it without conditions. This was the council afterwards referred to by Stanton when he said, "We saw ten generals afraid to fight." J. H., Diary.

This plan of campaign having been definitely adopted, Mr. Lincoln urged it forward as eagerly as if it had been his own. John Tucker, one of the Assistant Secretaries of War, was charged by the President and Mr. Stanton with the entire task of transporting the Army of the Potomac to its new base, and the utmost diligence was enjoined upon him. Quartermasters Rufus Ingalls and Henry C. Hodges were assigned to assist him. We shall see that Tucker performed the prodigious task intrusted to him in a manner not excelled by any similar feat in the annals of the world.

But meanwhile there were two things that the President was anxious to have done, and General McClellan undertook them. One was to reopen

CHAP. IX. the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the other to clear out the rebel batteries that still obstructed the navigation of the Potomac. For the first, extensive preparations were made: a large body of troops was collected at Harper's Ferry; canal-boats were brought there in sufficient quantity to make a permanent bridge. General McClellan went to the place and, finding everything satisfactory for the operation, telegraphed for a large additional force of cavalry, artillery, and a division of infantry to rendezvous at once at Harper's Ferry, to cross as soon as the bridge was completed, which would be only the work of a day, and then to push on to Winchester and Strasburg. It was only on the morning of the next day, when the attempt was made to pass the canal-boats through the lift-lock, that it was discovered they were some six inches too wide to go through. The general thus found that his permanent bridge, so long planned, and from which so much had been expected, was impossible. He countermanded his order for the troops; contented himself with a reconnaissance to Charlestown and Martinsburg, and returned to Washington, as he says, "well satisfied with what had been accomplished." He was much surprised at finding that his satisfaction was not shared by the President. Mr. Lincoln's slow anger was thoroughly roused by this ridiculous outcome of an important enterprise, and he received the general on his return in a manner that somewhat disturbed his complacency.

Chase in his Diary said the expedition died of lockjaw.

McClellan went on in his leisurely way, preparing for a movement upon the batteries near the Occoquan, undisturbed by the increasing signs of

electric perturbation at the Executive Mansion and the Capitol, which answered but faintly to the growing excitement in the North. The accumulating hostility and distrust of General McClellan, —totally unjust as it affected his loyalty and honor and his ardent desire to serve his country in the way that he thought best,—though almost entirely unknown to him, was poured upon the President, the heads of Government, and the leading Members of Congress in letters and conversations and newspaper leaders. Mr. Lincoln felt the injustice of much of this criticism, but he also felt powerless to meet it, unless some measures were adopted to force the general into an activity which was as necessary to his own reputation as to the national cause. The 22d of February came and passed, and the President's order to move on that day was not obeyed. McClellan's inertia prevailed over the President's anxious eagerness. CHAP. IX. 1862.

On the 8th of March, Mr. Lincoln issued two more important General Orders. The first directed General McClellan to divide the Army of the Potomac into four army corps, to be commanded respectively by Generals Irvin McDowell, E. V. Sumner, S. P. Heintzelman, and E. D. Keyes; the forces to be left in front of Washington were to be placed in command of General James S. Wadsworth. A fifth corps was to be formed, to be commanded by General N. P. Banks. For months this measure had been pressed upon General McClellan by the Government. An army of 150,000 men, it was admitted, could not be adequately commanded by the machinery of divisions and brigades alone. But though McClellan accepted this view in

CHAP IX. principle, he could not be brought to put it into practice. He said that he would prefer to command the army personally on its first campaign, and then select the corps commanders for their behavior in the field. The Government thought better to make the organization at once, giving the command of corps to the ranking division commanders. The fact that of the four generals chosen three had been in favor of an immediate movement against the enemy in front of Washington will of course be considered as possessing a certain significance. It was usually regarded as a grievance by the partisans of General McClellan. The other order is of such importance that we give it entire:

PRESIDENT'S GENERAL WAR ORDER, No. 3.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, March 8, 1862.

Ordered, That no change of the base of operations of the Army of the Potomac shall be made without leaving in and about Washington such a force as, in the opinion of the General-in-Chief and the commanders of army corps, shall leave said city entirely secure.

That no more than two army corps (about fifty thousand troops) of said Army of the Potomac shall be moved *en route* for a new base of operations until the navigation of the Potomac from Washington to the Chesapeake Bay shall be freed from enemy's batteries and other obstructions, or until the President shall hereafter give express permission. That any movement as aforesaid, *en route* for a new base of operations, which may be ordered by the General-in-Chief, and which may be intended to move upon the Chesapeake Bay, shall begin to move upon the bay as early as the 18th of March, instant, and the General-in-Chief shall be responsible that it moves as early as that day.

Ordered, That the Army and Navy coöperate in an immediate effort to capture the enemy's batteries upon the Potomac between Washington and the Chesapeake Bay. CHAP. IX.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

L. THOMAS, *Adjutant-General.*

This order has always been subject to the severest criticism from General McClellan's partisans; but if we admit that it was proper for the President to issue any order at all, there can be no valid objection made to the substance of this one. It was indispensable that Washington should be left secure; it would have been madness to allow General McClellan to take *all* the troops to the Peninsula, leaving the Potomac obstructed by the enemy's batteries so near the capital; and the fixing of a date beyond which the beginning of the movement should not be postponed had been shown to be necessary by the exasperating experience of the past eight months. The criticism so often made, that a general who required to have such orders as these given him should have been dismissed the service, is the most difficult of all to meet. Nobody felt so deeply as Mr. Lincoln the terrible embarrassment of having a general in command of that magnificent army who was absolutely without initiative; who answered every suggestion of advance with demands for reënforcements; who met entreaties and reproaches with unending arguments to show the superiority of the enemy and the insufficiency of his own resources; and who yet possessed in an eminent degree the enthusiastic devotion of his friends and the general confidence of the rank and file. There was so much of executive efficiency and ability about him

CHAP. IX. that the President kept on hoping to the last that if he could once "get him started" he would then handle the army well and do great things with it.

CHAPTER X

MANASSAS EVACUATED

SUNDAY, the 9th of March, was a day of swiftly succeeding emotions at the Executive Mansion. The news of the havoc wrought by the *Merrimac* in Hampton Roads the day before arrived in the morning, and was received with profound chagrin by the calmest spirits, and with something like consternation by the more excitable. But in the afternoon astonishing tidings came to reverse the morning's depression. The first was of the timely arrival of the *Monitor*, followed shortly, on the completion of the telegraph to Fort Monroe, by the news of her battle and victory. The exultation of the Government over this providential success was changed to amazement by the receipt of intelligence that the rebel batteries on the Potomac were already abandoned; and the tale of surprises was completed by the news which came in the evening that the Confederate army had abandoned their works at Manassas, retreating southward. General McClellan was with the President and the Secretary of War when this message arrived, and he received it, as might have been expected, with incredulity, which at last gave way to stupefaction. He started at once across the river, ostensibly to

CHAP. X. verify the intelligence, and issued an order that night for an immediate advance of the army upon Centreville and Manassas. In the elaborate report by which he strove, a year after the fact, to shift from himself the responsibility of all errors, occurs this remarkable sentence: "The retirement of the enemy towards Richmond had been expected as the natural consequence of the movement to the Peninsula, but their adoption of this course immediately on ascertaining that such a movement was intended, while it relieved me from the results of the undue anxiety of my superiors and attested the character of the design, was unfortunate in that the then almost impassable roads between our positions and theirs deprived us of the opportunity for inflicting damage usually afforded by the withdrawal of a large army in the face of a powerful adversary."

W. R. Vol. V., p. 51.

This was the theory immediately adopted by himself, propagated among his staff, communicated to the Prince de Joinville, who published it in France on his return there, and to the Comte de Paris, who, after twenty years, incorporated it in his history — that the enemy, having heard of his scheme for going to the Peninsula, through the indiscretion of the Government, had suddenly taken flight from Manassas. General McClellan asserts this in his report a dozen times; he reiterates it as if he felt that his reputation depended upon it. If it is not true, then in the long contest with the President in regard to a direct attack from Washington the President was right and McClellan was wrong.

The straightforward narrative of General Johnston, and the official orders and correspondence of

the Confederate officers, show that there is not the slightest foundation for this theory of General McClellan's. They show, on the contrary, that the rebel government, nearly a month before this, had concluded that Johnston's position was untenable; that Johnston had shared in the belief, and had begun his preparations to retire on the 22d of February; that instead of ascertaining McClellan's intention to move to the lower Chesapeake, he had been of the opinion that McClellan would advance upon the line designated by Mr. Lincoln, because it was the best line for attack and the most difficult for the rebels to defend; that he knew McClellan's enormous superiority in numbers, and did not purpose to risk everything in resisting him there; that on the 5th of March, having received information of unusual activity in our army in the direction of Dumfries, he gave his final orders, and on the 7th began to move. He proceeded with the greatest deliberation, writing to one of his generals on the 15th, "McClellan seems not to value time especially." His subordinates were equally convinced that the Confederate right was the object of the Union advance; Holmes wrote in that sense to Robert E. Lee on the 15th of March. Lee, who was then directing military operations in Richmond, answered him on the 16th, concurring in this view, recognizing the "advantages" of such a plan, and saying, "that he will advance upon our line as soon as he can, I have no doubt." Until the 18th of March Johnston did not suspect that McClellan was not advancing to strike his right flank; he then fell back behind the Rapidan, to guard against other contingencies.

CHAP. A.

1862.

Johnston, "Narrative of Military Operations," p. 102.

W. R. Vol. V., p. 1101.

1862.

CHAP. X. Even while our vast army was passing down the Potomac he could not make out where it was going. So late as the early days of April, Jefferson Davis was in doubt as to McClellan's destination, and Johnston only heard of the advance upon Yorktown about the 5th of that month.

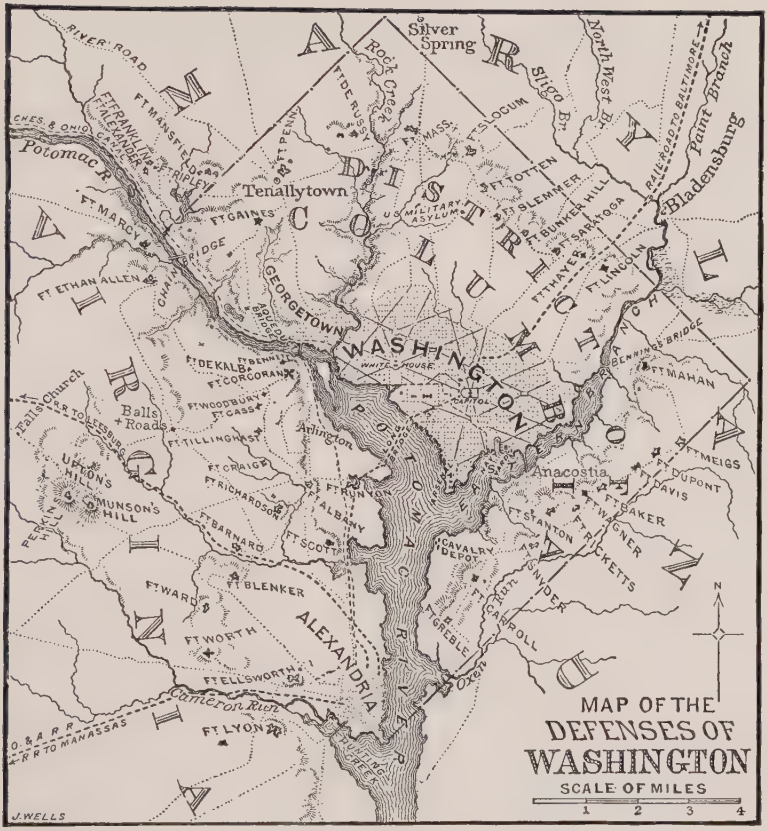
Johnston, "Narrative of Military Operations," p. 109.

1862.

By the very test, therefore, to which General McClellan appeals in the paragraph quoted above, his conduct during the autumn and winter stands finally condemned. By their contemporaneous letters and orders, by their military movements in an important crisis, by their well-considered historical narratives, the Confederate Government and generals have established these facts beyond all possibility of future refutation: that the plan for a direct attack, suggested by Lincoln and rejected by McClellan, was a sound and practicable one; it was the plan they expected and dreaded to see adopted, because it was the one easiest to accomplish and hardest to resist. When they fancied that they saw the Army of the Potomac preparing to move, it was this plan alone of which they thought; and they immediately gave up their position, as they had been for weeks preparing to do, at the first intimation of a forward movement. The long delay of five months, during three of which the roads were in unusually fine condition,[1] during all

[1] Pollard's History, Vol. I., p. 184, says: "A long, lingering Indian summer, with roads more hard and skies more beautiful than Virginia had seen for many a year, invited the enemy to advance." Johnston, "Narrative," page 84, says that the roads were practicable until the last of December.

From the admirable monograph of Major-General A. S. Webb, Chief-of-Staff of the Army of the Potomac, entitled "The Peninsula," we quote a sentence on this subject: "During all the time Johnston's army lay at Centreville insolently menacing Washington . . . it never presented an effective strength of over fifty



THE DEFENSES OF WASHINGTON DURING THE ANTIETAM CAMPAIGN, SEPTEMBER 1–20, 1862.

Extensive additions to the defenses of the west bank of the Potomac were made subsequently. Forts Alexander, Franklin, and Ripley were afterward united and called redoubts Davis, Kirby, and Cross, receiving later the name of Fort Sumner. Forts De Kalb, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Blenker were afterward changed respectively to Strong, Stevens, Reno, and Reynolds. See also page 168, Vol. IX.

of which the Union forces were as three to one of the enemy, remains absolutely without excuse. It can only be explained by that idiosyncrasy of General McClellan which led him always to double or treble the number of an enemy and the obstacles in his immediate vicinity.

It is little blame to Confederate generals that they could not divine what General McClellan was doing with the grand army of the Union during the week that followed the evacuation of Manassas. No soldier could have been expected to guess the meaning of that promenade of a vast army to Centreville and Manassas, and back to Alexandria. In spite of the "impassable roads," they made the journey with ease and celerity. The question why the whole army was taken has never been satisfactorily answered. General McClellan's explanation afterwards was that he wanted the troops to have a little experience of marching and to "get rid of their *impedimenta*." He claims in his report to have found on this excursion a full justification of his extravagant estimate of the enemy's force, and speaks with indignation of the calumnious stories of "quaker-guns" which were rife in the press at the time. Every one now knows how fatally false the estimate was; and as to the "quaker-guns," this is what General Johnston says about them: "As we had not artillery enough for their works and for the army fighting elsewhere at the same time, rough wooden imitations of guns were made, and kept near the embrasures, in readiness for

thousand men. With more than twice that number McClellan remained inactive for many precious weeks, under the delusion that he was confronted by a force nearly equal to his own."

CHAP. X.

Johnston, "Narrative of Military Operations," p. 78.

exhibition in them. To conceal the absence of carriages, the embrasures were covered with sheds made of bushes. These were the quaker-guns afterwards noticed in Northern papers."

Without further discussing where the fault lay, the fact is beyond dispute that when the evacuation of Manassas was known throughout the country, the military reputation of General McClellan received serious damage. No explanation made at the time, and, we may add, none made since then, could account satisfactorily for such a mistake as to the condition of the enemy, such utter ignorance as to his movements. The first result of it was the removal of General McClellan from the command of the armies of the United States. This resolution was taken by the President himself, on the 11th of March. On that day he prepared the order known as "President's War Order, No. 3," and in the evening called together Mr. Seward, Mr. Chase, and Mr. Stanton, and read it to them. It was in these words:

PRESIDENT'S WAR ORDER, No. 3.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, March 11, 1862.

Major-General McClellan having personally taken the field at the head of the Army of the Potomac, until otherwise ordered he is relieved from the command of the other military departments, he retaining command of the Department of the Potomac.

Ordered further, That the departments now under the respective commands of Generals Halleck and Hunter, together with so much of that under General Buell as lies west of a north and south line indefinitely drawn through Knoxville, Tenn., be consolidated and designated the Department of the Mississippi, and that, until other-

wise ordered, Major-General Halleck have command of said department. CHAP. X.

Ordered also, That the country west of the Department of the Potomac and east of the Department of the Mississippi be a military department, to be called the Mountain Department, and that the same be commanded by Major-General Frémont. That all the commanders of departments, after the receipt of this order by them respectively, report severally and directly to the Secretary of War, and that prompt, full, and frequent reports will be expected of all and each of them. ABRAHAM LINCOLN. W. R. Vol. V., p. 54.

All the members of the Cabinet present heartily approved the order. The President gave his reason for issuing it while General McClellan was absent from Washington — a reason indeed apparent in the opening words, which were intended to take from the act any appearance of disfavor. The general's intimate biographers have agreed that it was because the President was afraid to do it while the general was in Washington. The manner of the order, which was meant as a kindness, was taken as a grievance. Mr. Seward advised that the order be issued in the name of the Secretary of War, but this proposition met with a decided protest from Mr. Stanton. He said there was some friction already between himself and the general's friends, and he feared that the act, if signed by him, would be attributed to personal feeling. The President decided to take the responsibility. In a manly and courteous letter the next day, McClellan accepted the disposition thus made of him. J. H., Diary.

On the 13th of March, at Fairfax Court House, General McClellan called together the four corps commanders who were with him and submitted to them for discussion the President's order of the 8th.

CHAP. X. The results of the council cannot be more briefly stated than in the following memorandum, drawn up by the generals who took part in it:

A council of the generals commanding army corps at the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac were of the opinion:

I. That the enemy having retreated from Manassas to Gordonsville, behind the Rappahannock and Rapidan, it is the opinion of the generals commanding army corps that the operations to be carried on will be best undertaken from Old Point Comfort, between the York and James rivers, provided —

First. That the enemy's vessel *Merrimac* can be neutralized;

Second. That the means of transportation, sufficient for an immediate transfer of the force to its new base, can be ready at Washington and Alexandria to move down the Potomac; and

Third. That a naval auxiliary force can he had to silence, or aid in silencing, the enemy's batteries on the York River.

Fourth. That the force to be left to cover Washington shall be such as to give an entire feeling of security for its safety from menace. (Unanimous.)

II. If the foregoing cannot be, the army should then be moved against the enemy behind the Rappahannock at the earliest possible moment, and the means for reconstructing bridges, repairing railroads, and stocking them with materials sufficient for supplying the army should at once be collected for both the Orange and Alexandria and Aquia and Richmond railroads. (Unanimous.)

N. B.— That with the forts on the right bank of the Potomac fully garrisoned, and those on the left bank occupied, a covering force in front of the Virginia line of 25,000 men would suffice. (Keyes, Heintzelman, and McDowell.) A total of 40,000 men for the defense of the city would suffice. (Sumner.)

These conclusions of the council were conveyed to Washington, and the President on the same day

sent back to General McClellan his approval, and his peremptory orders for the instant execution of the plan proposed, in these words signed by the Secretary of War: "The President having considered the plan of operations agreed upon by yourself and the commanders of army corps, makes no objection to the same, but gives the following directions as to its execution: First. Leave such force at Manassas Junction as shall make it entirely certain that the enemy shall not repossess himself of that position and line of communication. Second. Leave Washington entirely secure. Third. Move the remainder of the force down the Potomac, choosing a new base at Fort Monroe, or anywhere between here and there, or, at all events, move such remainder of the army at once in pursuit of the enemy by some route."

No commander could ask an order more unrestricted, more unhampered, than this. Choose your own route, your own course, only go; seek the enemy, and fight him.

Under the orders of John Tucker of the War Department, a fleet of transports had been preparing since the 27th of February. It is one of the many grievances mentioned by General McClellan in his report, that this work was taken entirely out of his hands and committed to those of Mr. Tucker; he thus estops himself from claiming any credit for one of the most brilliant feats of logistics ever recorded. On the 27th of February, Mr. Tucker received his orders; on the 17th of March, the troops began their embarkation; on the 5th of April, Mr. Tucker made his final report, announcing that he had transported to Fort Monroe, from Washington,

W. R. Vol. V., p. 50.

Ibid., p. 46.

CHAP. X. Perryville, and Alexandria, "121,500 men, 14,592 animals, 1150 wagons, 44 batteries, 74 ambulances, besides pontoon bridges, telegraph materials, and the enormous quantity of equipage, etc., required for an army of such magnitude. The only loss," he adds, "of which I have heard is eight mules and nine barges, which latter went ashore in a gale within a few miles of Fort Monroe, the cargoes being saved." He is certainly justified in closing his narrative with these words: "I respectfully but confidently submit that, for economy and celerity of movement, this expedition is without a parallel on record."[1]

The first corps to embark was Heintzelman's; he took with him from General McClellan the most stringent orders to do nothing more than to select camping-grounds, send out reconnaissances, engage guides and spies, "but to make no important move in advance." The other forces embarked in turn, McDowell's corps being left to the last; and before it was ready to sail, General McClellan himself started on the 1st of April, with the headquarters on the steamer *Commodore*, leaving behind him a state of things that made it necessary to delay the departure of McDowell's troops still further.

McClellan, Report.

In all the orders of the President it had been clearly stated that, as an absolute condition precedent to the army being taken away to a new base, enough troops should be left at Washington to make that city absolutely safe, not only from

[1] The means by which this work was done were as follows:

113 steamers, each at an average price per day	$215.10
188 schooners, each at an average price per day	24.45
88 barges, each at an average price per day	14.27

capture, but from serious menace. The partisans of General McClellan then, and ever since then, have contended that, as Washington could not be seriously attacked without exposing Richmond to capture, undue importance was attached to it in these orders. It would be a waste of words to argue with people who place the political and strategic value of these two cities on a level. The capture of Richmond, without the previous virtual destruction of the rebel armies, would have been, it is true, an important achievement, but the seizure of Washington by the rebels would have been a fatal blow to the Union cause. General McClellan was in the habit of saying that if the rebel army should take Washington while he was at Richmond they could never get back; but it might be said that the general who would permit Washington to be taken could not be relied on to prevent the enemy from doing what they liked afterwards. Mr. Lincoln was unquestionably right in insisting that Washington must not only be rendered safe from capture, but must also be without the possibility of serious danger. This view was adopted by the council of corps commanders, who met on the 13th of March at Fairfax Court House. They agreed unanimously upon this principle, and then, so as to leave no doubt as to details, three of the four gave the opinion that after the forts on the Virginia side were fully garrisoned, and those on the Maryland side occupied, a covering force of 25,000 men would be required.

The morning after General McClellan had sailed for Fort Monroe, the Secretary of War was astonished to hear from General James S. Wadsworth,

CHAP. X. the military Governor of the District of Washington, that McClellan had left him present for duty only 19,000 men, and that from that force he had orders to detach eight good regiments. He further reported that his command was "entirely inadequate to the important duty to which it was assigned." As General Wadsworth was a man of the highest intelligence, courage, and calm judgment, the President was greatly concerned by this emphatic statement. Orders were at once given to General E. A. Hitchcock, an accomplished veteran officer on duty at the War Department, and to Adjutant-General Lorenzo Thomas, to investigate the statement made by General Wadsworth. They reported the same night that it would require 30,000 men to man and occupy the forts, which, with the covering force of 25,000, would make 55,000 necessary for the proper defense of the city, according to the judgment of the council of corps commanders. They confirmed the report of Wadsworth that his efficient force consisted of 19,000, from which General McClellan had ordered eight regiments away. They therefore concluded "that the requirement of the President, that the city should be left entirely secure, had not been fully complied with." In accordance with this report the President directed that General McDowell's corps should not be sent to the Peninsula until further orders.[1]

[1] General McClellan made in his report an elaborate effort to explain away these facts. He claims to have left a force of 73,000 for the defense of Washington, including in the number all the troops under Dix in Maryland, under Banks in the Shenandoah, all those at Warrenton, at Manassas, and on the lower Potomac. But he does not deny the facts stated by Wadsworth and confirmed by Hitchcock and Thomas.

MAP OF FORT DONELSON, AS INVESTED BY GENERAL GRANT; BASED ON THE OFFICIAL MAP BY GENERAL J. B. M^cPHERSON.

Opposite page 185.

CHAPTER XI

FORT DONELSON

THE news of the fall of Fort Henry created a sudden consternation among the Confederate commanders in Tennessee. It seemed as if the keystone had unexpectedly fallen out of their arch of well-planned defenses. Generals A. S. Johnston, Beauregard, and Hardee immediately met in a council of war at Bowling Green, and after full discussion united in a memorandum acknowledging the disaster and resolving on the measures which in their judgment it rendered necessary. They foresaw that Fort Donelson would probably also fall; that Johnston's army must retreat to Nashville to avoid capture; that since Columbus was now separated from Bowling Green, the main army at Columbus must fall back to Humboldt, or possibly to Grand Junction, leaving only a sufficient garrison to make a desperate defense of the works and the river; and immediate orders were issued to prepare for these movements. Nevertheless, Johnston, to use his own language, resolved "to fight for Nashville at Donelson." For this purpose he divided the army at Bowling Green, starting 8000 of his men under Generals Buckner and Floyd, together with 4000 more under Pillow from other points, on

Beauregard, Memorandum, Feb. 7, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 861.

Johnston to Committee of Confederate House of Representatives, March 17, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 922.

CHAP. XI. Johnston to Benjamin, Feb. 8, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 864.

a rapid march to reënforce the threatened fort, while General Hardee led his remaining 14,000 men on their retreat to Nashville. This retreat was not alone a choice of evils. Even if Fort Henry had not fallen and Donelson been so seriously menaced, the overwhelming force of Buell would have compelled a retrograde movement. Had Buell been a commander of more enterprise, he would have seized this chance of inflicting great damage upon the diminished enemy in retreat. His advance-guard, indeed, followed; but Johnston's remnant, marching night and day, succeeded in reaching the Cumberland River opposite Nashville, where, after preparations to cross in haste, the rebel commander waited with intense eagerness to hear the fate of Donelson.

Of the two commanders in the West, the idea of the movement up the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers was more favorably thought of by Halleck than by Buell. Buell pointed out its value, but began no movement that looked to its execution. Halleck, on the contrary, not only realized its importance, but immediately entertained the design of ultimately carrying it out; thus he wrote at the time he ordered the reconnaissance which demonstrated its practicability: "The demonstration which General Grant is now making I have no doubt will keep them [the enemy] in check till preparations can be made for operations on the Tennessee or Cumberland." His conception of the necessary preparations was, however, almost equivalent to the rejection of the plan. He thought that it would require a force of 60,000 men; and to delay it till that number and their

Halleck to McClellan, Jan. 14, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 503.

requisite material of war could be gathered or detached under prevailing ideas would amount to indefinite postponement.

When at last, through Grant's importunity, the movement was actually begun by the advance to capture Fort Henry, a curious interest in the expedition and its capabilities developed itself among the commanders. Grant's original proposition was simply to capture Fort Henry and establish a large camp. Nothing further was proposed, and Halleck's instructions went only to the same extent, with one addition. As the reported approach of Beauregard with reënforcements had been the turning influence in Halleck's consent, so he proposed that the capture of Fort Henry should be immediately followed by a dash at the railroad bridges across the Tennessee and their destruction, to prevent those reënforcements from reaching Johnston. But with the progress of Grant's movement the chances of success brightened, and the plan began correspondingly to expand. On the 2d of February, when Grant's troops were preparing to invest Fort Henry, Halleck's estimate of coming possibilities had risen a little. He wrote to Buell: "At present it is only proposed to take and occupy Fort Henry and Dover [Donelson], and, if possible, cut the railroad from Columbus to Bowling Green." Here we have Donelson added to Henry in the intention of the department commander. That the same intention existed in Grant's mind is evident, for, as already related, on the fall of Henry on the 6th he immediately telegraphed to Halleck, "Fort Henry is ours. . . I shall take and destroy Fort Donelson on the 8th, and return to Fort Henry." It is to be noted that,

Halleck to Grant, Jan. 30, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 122.

Halleck to Buell, Feb. 2, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 578.

CHAP. XI. in proposing to destroy Fort Donelson, he still limits himself to his original proposition of an intrenched camp at Fort Henry. At the critical moment Halleck's confidence in success at Fort Henry wavered, and he called upon Buell with importunity for sufficient help to make sure work of it. But Buell, commanding 72,502 men,—46,150 of them "fit for the field,"—could only send a single brigade to aid in a work which he had described as of such momentous consequence. Afterwards, indeed, he sent eight regiments more; but these were raw troops from Ohio and Indiana which McClellan, with curious misconception of their usefulness, had ordered to Buell, who did not need them, instead of to Halleck, who was trying to make every man do double duty.

Buell to Thomas, Jan. 23, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 563. Buell to McClellan, Feb. 5, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 584.

McClellan, satisfied that Buell could not advance against Johnston's force at Bowling Green over the difficult winter roads, and having not yet heard of the surrender of Fort Henry, suggested to both Buell and Halleck the temporary suspension of operations on other lines in order to make a quick combined movement up the Tennessee and the Cumberland. This was on February 6. Buell's fancy at first caught at the proposal, for he replied that evening: "This whole move, right in its strategical bearing, but commenced by General Halleck without appreciation, preparation, or concert, has now become of vast magnitude. I was myself thinking of a change of the line to support it when I received your dispatch. It will have to be made in the face of 50,000 if not 60,000 men, and is hazardous. I will answer definitely in the morning." Halleck was more positive in his convictions.

Buell to McClellan, Feb. 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 587, 588.

He telegraphed to McClellan on the same day: "If you can give me, in addition to what I have in this department, ten thousand men, I will take Fort Henry, cut the enemy's line, and paralyze Columbus. Give me 25,000, and I will threaten Nashville and cut off railroad communication, so as to force the enemy to abandon Bowling Green without a battle."

Halleck to McClellan, Feb. 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 587.

News of the fall of Fort Henry having been received at Washington, McClellan twenty-four hours later telegraphed to Halleck: "Either Buell or yourself should soon go to the scene of operations. Why not have Buell take the line of [the] Tennessee and operate on Nashville, while your troops turn Columbus? These two points gained, a combined movement on Memphis will be next in order." The dispatch was in substance repeated to Buell, who by this time thought he had made up his mind, for two hours later he answered: "I cannot, on reflection, think a change of my line would be advisable. . . I hope General Grant will not require further reënforcements. I will go if necessary." Thus on the night of the 7th, with the sole aid from himself of the single drilled brigade from Green River and the eight raw regiments from Ohio and Indiana, he proposed to leave the important central line on which Grant had started to its chances.

A night's reflection made him doubt the correctness of his decision, for he telegraphed on the morning of the 8th: "I am concentrating and preparing, but will not decide definitely yet." Halleck's views were less changeable: at noon on the 8th, he again urged that Buell should transfer the

CHAP. XI.

bulk of his forces to the Cumberland River, to move by water on Nashville. To secure this coöperation, he further proposed a modification of department lines to give Buell command on the Cumberland and Hitchcock or Sherman on the Tennessee, with superior command for himself over both. No immediate response came from Washington, and three days elapsed when Halleck asked Buell specifically: "Can't you come with all your available forces and command the column up the Cumberland? I shall go to the Tennessee this week." Buell's desire, vibrating like a pendulum between the two brilliant opportunities before him, now swung towards Halleck's proposal, but with indefiniteness and fatal slowness. He answered that he would go either to the Cumberland or to the Tennessee, but that it would require ten days to transfer his troops.

Halleck to Buell, Feb. 11, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 605.

Buell to Halleck, Feb. 12, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 607.

During his hesitation, events forced him to a new conclusion. News came that the rebels had evacuated Bowling Green, and he telegraphed: "The evacuation of Bowling Green, leaving the way open to Nashville, makes it proper to resume my original plan. I shall advance on Nashville with all the speed I can." From this last determination Halleck appealed beseechingly to the General-in-Chief. He announced that Grant had formally invested Fort Donelson and that the bombardment was progressing favorably, but he further explained that since the evacuation of Bowling Green the enemy were concentrating against Grant. He claimed that it was bad strategy for Buell to advance on Nashville over broken bridges and bad roads, and this point he reiterated with

Buell to McClellan, Feb. 15, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 620.

emphasis. He telegraphed on February 16: "I am still decidedly of the opinion that Buell should not advance on Nashville, but come to the Cumberland with his available forces. United to Grant we can take and hold Fort Donelson and Clarksville, and by another central movement cut off both Columbus and Nashville. . . Unless we can take Fort Donelson very soon we shall have the whole force of the enemy on us. Fort Donelson is the turning-point of the war, and we must take it at whatever sacrifice."

Halleck to McClellan, Feb. 16, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 624, 625.

But his appeal was unavailing. McClellan took sides with Buell, insisting that to occupy Nashville would be most decisive. Buell had, indeed, ordered Nelson's division to go to the help of Grant; but in the conflict of his own doubts and intentions the orders had been so tardy that Nelson's embarkation was only beginning on the day when Donelson surrendered. McClellan's further conditional order to Buell, to help Grant if it were necessary, offered a yet more distant prospect of succor. If the siege of Donelson had been prolonged, assistance from these directions would, of course, have been found useful. In the actual state of facts, however, they show both Buell and McClellan incapable, even under continued pressure, of seizing and utilizing the fleeting chances of war which so often turn the scale of success, and which so distinctly call out the higher qualities of military leadership.

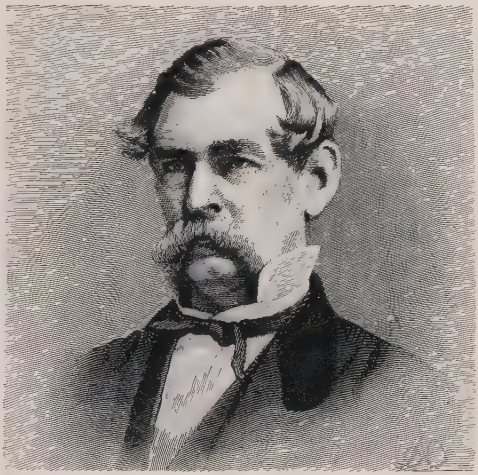
Amidst the sluggish counsels of commanders of departments, the energy of Grant and the courage and intrepidity of his raw Western soldiers had already decided one of the great crises of the war.

CHAP. XI.

Grant had announced to Halleck that he would storm Fort Donelson on the 8th of February, but he failed to count one of the chances of delay. "I contemplated taking Fort Donelson to-day with infantry and cavalry alone," reported he, "but all my troops may be kept busily engaged in saving what we now have from the rapidly rising waters." This detention served to change the whole character of the undertaking. If he could have marched and attacked on the 8th, he would have found but 6000 men in the fort, which his own troops largely outnumbered; as it turned out, the half of Johnston's army sent from Bowling Green and other points, conducted by Generals Pillow, Floyd, and Buckner, arrived before the fort was invested, increasing the garrison to an aggregate of 17,000 and greatly extending the lines of rifle-pits and other defenses.[1] This presented an altogether different and more serious problem. The enemy before Grant was now, if not superior, at least equal in numbers, and had besides the protection of a large and well-constructed earthwork, armed with seventeen heavy and forty-eight field guns. It is probable that this changed aspect of affairs was not immediately known to him; if it was, he depended on the reenforcements which Halleck had promised, and which soon began to arrive. Early on the morning of the 12th he started on his march, with the divisions of McClernand and of Brigadier-General C. F. Smith, numbering fifteen thousand. At noon

Grant to Cullum, February 8, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 596.

[1] General Grant's estimate of the Confederate forces is 21,000. He says he marched against the fort with but 15,000, but that he received reënforcements before the attack, and their arrival had, at the time of the surrender, increased his army to about 27,000. —Grant, "Personal Memoirs," Vol. I., pp. 299, 305, 315.



General C. F. Smith.

they were within two miles of Donelson. That afternoon and all the following day, February 13, were occupied in driving in the rebel pickets, finding the approaches, and drawing the lines of investment around the fort. A gallant storming assault by four Illinois regiments upon one of the rebel batteries was an exciting incident of the afternoon's advance, but was unsuccessful.

To understand the full merit of the final achievement, the conditions under which the siege of Donelson was thus begun must be briefly mentioned. The principal fort, or earthwork which bore the military name, lay on the west bank of the Cumberland River, half a mile north of the little town of Dover. The fort occupied the terminal knoll of a high ridge ending in the angle between the river and the mouth of Hickman Creek. This main work consisted of two batteries of heavy guns, primarily designed to control the river navigation. But when General Johnston resolved to defend Nashville at Donelson and gathered an army of 17,000 men for the purpose, the original fort and the town of Dover and all the intervening space were inclosed by a long, irregular line of rifle-pits connecting more substantial breastworks and embankments on the favorable elevations, in which field batteries were planted; the whole chain of intrenchments, extending from Hickman Creek on the north till it inclosed the town of Dover on the south, having a total length of about two and a half miles. Outside the rifle-pits were the usual obstructions of felled trees and abatis, forming an interlacing barrier difficult to penetrate.

CHAP. XI. The Union troops had had no fighting at Fort Henry; at that place the gunboats had done the work. The debarkation on the Tennessee, the reconnaissance, the march towards Donelson, the

February, 1862. picket skirmishing during the 12th and 13th, had only been such as to give them zest and exhilaration. When, on the morning of the 12th, the march began, the weather was mild and agreeable; but on the afternoon of the 13th, while the army was stretching itself cautiously around the rebel intrenchments, the thermometer suddenly went down, a winter storm set in with rain, snow, sleet, ice, and a piercing northwest wind, that made the men lament the imprudence they had committed in leaving overcoats and blankets behind. Grant's army was composed entirely of Western regiments; fifteen from the single State of Illinois, and a further aggregate of seventeen from the States of Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, and Iowa. Some of these regiments had seen guerrilla fighting in Missouri, some had been through the battle of Belmont, but many were new to the privations and dangers of an active campaign. Nearly all the officers came from civil life; but a common thought, energy, and will animated the whole mass. It was neither discipline nor mere military ambition; it was patriot work in its noblest and purest form. They had left their homes and varied peaceful occupations to defend the Government and put down the rebellion. They were in the flush and exaltation of a common heroic impulse: in such a mood, the rawest recruit was as brave as the oldest veteran; and in this spirit they endured hunger and cold, faced snow and ice,

held tenaciously the lines of the siege, climbed without flinching through the tangled abatis, and advanced into the deadly fire from the rifle-pits with a purpose and a devotion never excelled by soldiers of any nation or epoch. CHAP. XI.

Flag-officer Foote, with six gunboats, arrived on the evening of the 13th; also six regiments sent by water. Fort Henry had been reduced by the gunboats alone, and it was resolved first to try the effect of these new and powerful fighting machines upon the works of Donelson. Accordingly on Friday, February 14, the assault was begun by an attack from the six gunboats. As before, the situation of the fort enabled the four ironclads to advance up-stream towards the batteries, the engines holding them steadily against the swift current, presenting their heavily plated bows as a target for the enemy. The attack had lasted an hour and a half. The ironclads were within four hundred yards of the rebel embankments, the heavy armor was successfully resisting the shot and shell from the fort, the fire of the enemy was slackening, indicating that the water-batteries were becoming untenable, when two of the gunboats were suddenly disabled and drifted out of the fight, one having her wheel carried away, and the other her tiller-ropes damaged. These accidents, due to the weakness and exposure of the pilot-houses, compelled a cessation of the river attack and a withdrawal of the gunboats for repairs, and gave the beleaguered garrison corresponding exultation and confidence. Flag-officer Foote had been wounded in the attack, and deeming it necessary to take his disabled vessels tem- 1862.

CHAP. XI. porarily back to Cairo, he requested Grant to visit him for consultation. Grant therefore went on board one of the gunboats before dawn on the
Feb., 1862. morning of the 15th, and it was arranged between the commanders that he should perfect his lines and hold the fort in siege until Foote could return from Cairo to assist in renewing the attack.

During all this time there had been a fluctuation of fear and hope in the garrison—from the repulse of McClernand's assault on the 13th, the prompt investment of the fort, the gunboat attack and its repulse. There was want of harmony between Floyd, Pillow, and Buckner, the three commanders within the fort. Prior to the gunboat attack a bold sortie was resolved upon, which project was, however, abandoned through the orders or non-compliance of Pillow. That night the second council of war determined to make a serious effort to extricate the garrison. At six o'clock on the morning of the 15th the divisions of Pillow and Buckner moved out to attack McClernand's division, and if possible open an avenue of retreat by the road running southward from Dover to Charlotte. The Confederates made their attack not only with spirit but with superior numbers. Driving back McClernand's right, they were by eleven o'clock in the forenoon in complete possession of the Charlotte road. Buckner, who simultaneously attacked McClernand's left, did not fare so well. He was repulsed, and compelled to retire to the intrenchments from which he had issued. At this critical point Grant returned from his visit to Foote. What he found and what he did is stated with brevity in the message he hastily sent back :

"If all the gunboats that can will immediately make their appearance to the enemy it may secure us a victory. Otherwise all may be defeated. A terrible conflict ensued in my absence, which has demoralized a portion of my command, and I think the enemy is much more so. If the gunboats do not show themselves, it will reassure the enemy and still further demoralize our troops. I must order a charge, to save appearances. I do not expect the gunboats to go into action, but to make appearance and throw a few shells at long range."

Grant to Foote, Feb. 15, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 618.

In execution of the design here announced, Grant sent an order to General C. F. Smith, commanding the second division, who held the extreme left of the investing line, to storm the intrenchments in front of him. His men had as yet had no severe fighting, and now went forward enthusiastically, carrying an important outwork with impetuous gallantry. Learning of his success, Grant in turn ordered forward the entire remainder of his force under Brigadier-General Lew. Wallace and General McClernand. This order was executed during the afternoon, and by nightfall the whole of the ground lost by the enemy's morning attack was fully regained. There is a conflict of testimony about the object of the attack of the enemy. Buckner says it was to effect the immediate escape of the garrison; Pillow says he had no such understanding, and that neither he nor any one else made preparation for departure. The opportunity, therefore, which his division had during the forenoon to retire by the open road to Charlotte was not improved. By evening the chance was gone, for the Federals had once more closed that avenue of escape.

CHAP. XI. Feb., 1862.

During the night of the 15th, the Confederate commanders met in council to decide what they should do. Buckner, the junior, very emphatically gave the others to understand that the situation of the garrison was desperate, and that it would require but an hour or two of assault on the next morning to capture his portion of the defenses. Such a contingency left them no practical alternative. Floyd and Pillow had exaggerated ideas of the personal danger they would be in from the Government if they permitted themselves to become prisoners, and made known their great solicitude to get away. An agreement was therefore reached, through which Floyd, the senior general, first turned over his command to Pillow; then Pillow, the second in command, in the same way relinquished his authority to Buckner, the junior general. This formality completed, Pillow hastily crossed the river and went to Clarksville with his staff, while Floyd, taking advantage of the arrival of a rebel steamer, boarded it, with his personal followers, during the night, and abandoned the fort and its garrison.

As usual, the active correspondents of Western newspapers were with the expedition, and through their telegrams something of the varying fortunes of the Kentucky campaign and the Donelson siege had become known to the country, while President Lincoln at Washington gleaned still further details from the scattering official reports which came to the War Department through army channels. The new events again aroused his most intense solicitude, and prompted him to send the following suggestion by telegraph to Halleck:

You have Fort Donelson safe, unless Grant shall be overwhelmed from outside; to prevent which latter will, I think, require all the vigilance, energy, and skill of yourself and Buell, acting in full coöperation. Columbus will not get at Grant, but the force from Bowling Green will. They hold the railroad from Bowling Green to within a few miles of Fort Donelson, with the bridge at Clarksville undisturbed. It is unsafe to rely that they will not dare to expose Nashville to Buell. A small part of their force can retire slowly towards Nashville, breaking up the railroad as they go, and keep Buell out of that city twenty days. Meantime Nashville will be abundantly defended by forces from all South and perhaps from here at Manassas. Could not a cavalry force from General Thomas on the Upper Cumberland dash across, almost unresisted, and cut the railroad at or near Knoxville, Tennessee? In the midst of a bombardment at Fort Donelson, why could not a gunboat run up and destroy the bridge at Clarksville? Our success or failure at Fort Donelson is vastly important, and I beg you to put your soul in the effort. I send a copy of this to Buell.

Lincoln to Halleck, Feb. 16, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 624.

Before this telegram reached its destination, the siege of Donelson was terminated. On Sunday morning, the 16th of February, when the troops composing the Federal line of investment were preparing for a final assault, a note came from Buckner to Grant, proposing an armistice to arrange terms of capitulation. The language of Grant's reply served to crown the fame of his achievement: "Yours of this date, proposing armistice and appointment of commissioners to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works." His resolute phrase gained him a prouder title than was ever bestowed by knightly accolade. Thereafter, the army and the country,

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Grant to Buckner, Feb. 16, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 161.

CHAP. XI.

with a fanciful play upon the initials of his name, spoke of him as "Unconditional Surrender Grant." Buckner had no other balm for the sting of his defeat than to say that Grant's terms were "ungenerous and unchivalric," but that necessity compelled him to accept them. That day Grant was enabled to telegraph to Halleck: "We have taken Fort Donelson and from 12,000 to 15,000 prisoners, including Generals Buckner and Bushrod R. Johnson; also about 20,000 stands of arms, forty-eight pieces of artillery, seventeen heavy guns, from 2000 to 4000 horses, and large quantities of commissary stores."

Grant to Halleck, Feb. 16, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 625.

By this brilliant and important victory Grant's fame sprang suddenly into full and universal recognition. President Lincoln nominated him major-general of volunteers, and the Senate at once confirmed the appointment. The whole military service felt the inspiriting event. Many of the colonels in Grant's army were made brigadier-generals; and promotion ran, like a quickening leaven, through the whole organization. Halleck also reminded the Government of his desire for larger power. "Make Buell, Grant, and Pope major-generals of volunteers," he telegraphed the day after the surrender, "and give me command in the West. I ask this in return for Forts Henry and Donelson."

Halleck to McClellan, Feb. 17, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 628.

CHAPTER XII

COMPENSATED ABOLISHMENT

THE annual message of President Lincoln at the opening of Congress in December, 1861, treated many subjects of importance—foreign relations, the condition of the finances, a reorganization of the Supreme Court, questions of military administration, the building of a military railroad through Kentucky to East Tennessee, the newly organized Territories, a review of military progress towards the suppression of rebellion. It contained also a vigorous practical discussion of the relations between capital and labor, which pointed out with singular force that "the insurrection is largely, if not exclusively, a war upon the first principle of popular government—the rights of the people." In addition to these topics, it treated another question of greater importance than all of them, but in so moderate a tone, and with such tentative suggestions, that it excited less immediate comment than any other. This was the question of slavery.

It had not escaped Mr. Lincoln's notice that the relations of slavery to the war were producing rapidly increasing complications and molding public thought to new and radical changes of opinion. His revocation of Frémont's proclamation had

CHAP. XII. momentarily checked the clamor of importunate agitators for military emancipation; but he saw clearly enough that a deep, though as yet undefined, public hope clung to the vague suggestion that slavery and rebellion might perish together. As a significant symptom of this undercurrent of feeling,

1861. there came to him in November a letter from George Bancroft, the veteran Democratic politician and national historian; a man eminent not only for his writings upon the science of government, but who as a member of President Polk's Cabinet had rendered signal and lasting service in national administration. Mr. Bancroft had lately presided at a meeting in New York called to collect contributions to aid the suffering loyalists of North Carolina. As it happened on all such occasions, the patriotism of the hour sprang forward to bold speech and radical argument. Even the moderate words of Mr. Bancroft on taking the chair reflected this reformatory spirit: "If slavery and the Union are incompatible, listen to the words that come to you from the tomb of Andrew Jackson: 'The Union must be preserved at all hazards.' . . If any one claims the compromises of the Constitution, let

"The New-York Times," Nov. 8, 1861. him begin by placing the Constitution in power by respecting it and upholding it." In the letter transmitting these remarks and the resolutions of the meeting to Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Bancroft made a yet more emphatic suggestion. He wrote: "Your Administration has fallen upon times which will be remembered as long as human events find a record. I sincerely wish to you the glory of perfect success. Civil war is the instrument of Divine Providence to root out social slavery; posterity will not be satis-

fied with the result, unless the consequences of the war shall effect an increase of free States. This is the universal expectation and hope of men of all parties." CHAP. XII. Bancroft to Lincoln, Nov. 15, 1861. MS.

Such a letter, from a man having the learning, talent, and political standing of its author, is of itself historic; but Mr. Lincoln's reply gives it a special significance. November 18, 1861, he wrote: "I esteem it a high honor to have received a note from Mr. Bancroft, inclosing the report of proceedings of a New York meeting taking measures for the relief of Union people of North Carolina. I thank you and all others participating for this benevolent and patriotic movement. The main thought in the closing paragraph of your letter is one which does not escape my attention, and with which I must deal in all due caution, and with the best judgment I can bring to it." This language gives us the exact condition of Mr. Lincoln's mind on the subject of slavery at that time. He hoped and expected to effect an "increase of free States" through emancipation; but we shall see that this emancipation was to come through the voluntary action of the States, and that he desired by such policy to render unnecessary the compulsory military enfranchisement which Frémont had attempted and which his followers advocated. Lincoln to Bancroft, Nov. 18, 1861. MS.

The caution and good judgment which President Lincoln applied to the solution of this dangerous problem become manifest when we reëxamine its treatment in his annual message mentioned above. Not referring directly to any general plan or hope of emancipation, he nevertheless approached the subject by discussing its immediate and practical

CHAP. XII. necessities in phraseology which gave him room for expansion into a more decisive policy. It is worth while, not merely to quote the whole passage, but to emphasize the sentences which were plainly designed to lead Congress and the country to the contemplation of new and possible contingencies.

> Under and by virtue of the act of Congress entitled "An Act to Confiscate Property used for Insurrectionary Purposes," approved August 6, 1861, the legal claims of certain persons to the labor and service of certain other persons have become forfeited; and numbers of the latter, *thus liberated, are already dependent on the United States, and must be provided for in some way.* Besides this, it is not impossible *that some of the States will pass similar enactments* for their own benefit respectively, and by operation of which persons of the same class will be thrown upon them for disposal. In such case I recommend *that Congress provide for accepting such persons from such States,* according to some mode of valuation, *in lieu, pro tanto, of direct taxes,* or upon some other plan to be agreed on with such States respectively; that such persons, on such acceptance by the General Government, *be at once deemed free;* and that, in any event, steps be taken *for colonizing both classes* (or the one first mentioned, if the other shall not be brought into existence) at some place or places in a climate congenial to them. It might be well to consider, too, whether the free colored people already in the United States could not, so far as individuals may desire, be included in such colonization. . . The war continues. In considering the policy to be adopted for suppressing the insurrection, I have been anxious and careful that the inevitable conflict for this purpose shall not degenerate into a violent and remorseless revolutionary struggle. I have, therefore, in every case, thought it proper to keep the integrity of the Union prominent as the primary object of the contest on our part, leaving all questions which are not of vital military importance to the more deliberate action of the Legislature.

In the exercise of my best discretion I have adhered to the blockade of the ports held by the insurgents, instead of putting in force, by proclamation, the law of Congress enacted at the late session for closing those ports. So, also, obeying the dictates of prudence, as well as the obligations of law, instead of transcending, I have adhered to the act of Congress to confiscate property used for insurrectionary purposes. If a new law upon the same subject shall be proposed, its propriety will be duly considered. The Union must be preserved; and hence, *all indispensable means must be employed.* We should not be in haste to determine that radical and extreme measures, which may reach the loyal as well as the disloyal, are indispensable.

Appendix, "Globe," Dec. 3, 1861, p. 3.

Apparently these propositions covered the simple recommendation of colonization, an old and familiar topic which had friends in both free and slave States; but the language, when closely scanned, is full of novel suggestions: that the war has already freed many slaves; that the war may free many more; that the President will impartially consider any new law of Congress increasing emancipation for rebellion; that he will not hastily adopt extreme measures; but that, finally, to preserve the Union, *all indispensable means* must be employed. These declarations, in fact, cover the whole of his subsequent treatment of the slavery question.

Congress was too busy with pressing practical legislation to find time for immediately elaborating by debate or enactment any of the recommendations thus made. It is not likely that the President expected early action from the national Legislature, for he at once turned his own attention to certain initiatory efforts which he had probably carefully meditated. He believed that under the pressure of war necessities the border slave States might be

CHAP. XII. induced to take up the idea of voluntary emancipation if the General Government would pay their citizens the full property value of the slaves they were asked to liberate; and this experiment seemed to him most feasible in the small State of Delaware, which retained only the merest fragment of a property interest in the peculiar institution.

Owing to the division of its voters between Breckinridge, Bell, Lincoln, and Douglas, the electoral vote of Delaware had been cast for Breckinridge in the Presidential election of 1860; but more adroit party management had succeeded in effecting a fusion of the Bell and Lincoln vote for Member of Congress, and George P. Fisher had been elected by a small majority. It is of little importance to know the exact shade of Mr. Fisher's politics during the campaign; when the rebellion broke out he was an ardent Unionist, a steadfast friend of Mr. Lincoln, and perhaps more liberal on the subject of slavery than any other border State Representative. He entered readily into Mr. Lincoln's views and plans, which were to induce the Legislature of Delaware to pass an act of gradual emancipation of the 1798 slaves which it contained by the census of 1860, on condition that the United States would pay to Delaware, to be distributed among its slave-owners in proper ratio, the sum of $400 for each slave, or a total of $719,200.

1861. Mr. Lincoln during the month of November had with his own hand written drafts of two separate bills embracing the principal details of the scheme. By the first, all negroes in Delaware, above the age of thirty-five years, should become

free on the passage of the act; all born after its passage should remain free; and all others, after suitable apprenticeship for children, should become free in the year 1893; also, that the State should meanwhile prevent any of its slaves being sold into servitude elsewhere. The provisions of the second draft were slightly different. Lincoln's manuscript explains: "On reflection I like No. 2 the better. By it the nation would pay the State $23,200 per annum for thirty-one years. All born after the passage of the act would be born free. All slaves above the age of thirty-five years would become free on the passage of the act. All others would become free on arriving at the age of thirty-five years until January, 1893, when all remaining of all ages would become free, subject to apprenticeship for minors born of slave mothers, up to the respective ages of twenty-one and eighteen." Upon consultation with the President, Mr. Fisher undertook to propose and commend the scheme to his influential party friends in Delaware, and if possible to induce the Legislature of that State to adopt it. CHAP. XII. MS. MS.

One of the drafts prepared by Mr. Lincoln was rewritten by the friends of the measure in Delaware, embodying the necessary details to give it proper force and local application to become a law of that State. In this shape it was printed and circulated among the members of the Legislature, then holding a special session at Dover. The Legislature of Delaware was not a large body; nine members of the Senate and twenty-one members of the House constituted the whole number. We have no record of the discussions, formal or informal, which the

CHAP. XII. proposition called forth. The final action, however, indicates the sentiment which prevailed. The friends of emancipation probably ascertained that a hostile majority would vote it down, therefore the laboriously prepared bill was never introduced. The pro-slavery members, unwilling to lose the opportunity of airing their conservatism, immediately prepared a joint resolution reciting the bill at full length and then loading it with the strongest phrases of condemnation which their party zeal could invent. They said it would encourage the abolition element in Congress; that it evinced a design to abolish slavery in the States; that Congress had no right to appropriate a dollar for the purchase of slaves; that they were unwilling to make Delaware guarantee the public faith of the United States; that when the people of Delaware desired to abolish slavery within her borders they would do so in their way; and intimated that the "suggestions of saving expense to the people" were a bribe, which they scornfully repelled. A majority of the twenty-one members of the House passed this joint resolution; but when it came to the Senate, on the 7th of February, four of its nine members voted "aye," four voted "no," and one was silent or absent; and so the joint resolution went back "non-concurred in." This seems to have closed the legislative record on the subject.

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Delaware Senate Journal, Special Session, 1861-62.

Mr. Lincoln was doubtless disappointed at the failure to give his plan of compensated gradual abolishment a starting-point by the favorable action of the State of Delaware. But he did not abandon the project, and his next step was to bring it, through Congress, to the attention of the

ROSCOE CONKLING.
In his seat in the Senate.

country and the States interested. On the 6th of March he sent to the Senate and the House of Representatives a special message, recommending the adoption of the following joint resolution: "*Resolved*, That the United States ought to coöperate with any State which may adopt gradual abolishment of slavery, giving to such State pecuniary aid, to be used by such State in its discretion, to compensate for the inconveniences, public and private, produced by such change of system." His message explained that this was merely the proposal of practical measures which he hoped would follow. He said: CHAP. XII. 1862. "Globe," March 6, 1862, p. 1102.

> The point is not that all the States tolerating slavery would very soon, if at all, initiate emancipation; but that while the offer is equally made to all, the more Northern shall, by such initiation, make it certain to the more Southern that in no event will the former ever join the latter in their proposed Confederacy. I say "initiation" because, in my judgment, gradual, and not sudden, emancipation is better for all. . . Such a proposition on the part of the General Government sets up no claim of a right by Federal authority to interfere with slavery within State limits, referring, as it does, the absolute control of the subject in each case to the State and its people immediately interested. It is proposed as a matter of perfectly free choice with them. In the annual message last December, I thought fit to say, "The Union must be preserved; and hence, all indispensable means must be employed." I said this, not hastily, but deliberately. War has been made, and continues to be, an indispensable means to this end. A practical reacknowledgment of the national authority would render the war unnecessary, and it would at once cease. If, however, resistance continues, the war must also continue; and it is impossible to foresee all the incidents which may attend and all the ruin which may follow it. Such as may seem

"Globe," March 6, 1862, pp. 1102, 1103.

CHAP. XII. indispensable, or may obviously promise great efficiency towards ending the struggle, must and will come.

To this public recommendation he added some cogent reasons in private letters to influential persons. Thus, three days after his message, he wrote to the editor of "The New-York Times":

I am grateful to the New York journals, and not less so to the "Times" than to others, for their kind notices of the late special message to Congress. Your paper, however, intimates that the proposition, though well intentioned, must fail on the score of expense. I do hope you will reconsider this. Have you noticed the facts that less than one-half day's cost of this war would pay for all the slaves in Delaware, at $400 per head? — that eighty-seven days' cost of this war would pay for all in Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Kentucky, and Missouri at the same price? Were those States to take the step, do you doubt that it would shorten the war more than eighty-seven days, and thus be an actual saving of expense? Please look at these things, and consider whether there should not be another article in the "Times."

Lincoln to Raymond, March 9, 1862. MS.

So again, to Senator McDougall, who was opposing the scheme with considerable earnestness in the Senate, he wrote privately on March 14:

As to the expensiveness of the plan of gradual emancipation, with compensation, proposed in the late message, please allow me one or two brief suggestions. Less than one half-day's cost of this war would pay for all the slaves in Delaware, at $400 per head. Thus:

All the slaves in Delaware by the census of 1860 are . . . 1798
$400

Cost of slaves $719,200
One day's cost of the war $2,000,000

Again, less than eighty-seven days' cost of this war would, at the same price, pay for all in Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Kentucky, and Missouri. Thus:

Slaves in Delaware	1,798
" " Maryland	87,188
" " District of Columbia	3,181
" " Kentucky	225,490
" " Missouri	114,965
	432,622
	$400
Cost of slaves	$173,048,800
Eighty-seven days' cost of the war	174,000,000

Do you doubt that taking the initiatory steps on the part of those States and this District would shorten the war more than eighty-seven days, and thus be an actual saving of expense? A word as to the *time* and *manner* of incurring the expense. Suppose, for instance, a State devises and adopts a system by which the institution absolutely ceases therein by a named day — say January 1, 1882. Then let the sum to be paid to such State by the United States be ascertained by taking from the census of 1860 the number of slaves within the State, and multiplying that number by 400 — the United States to pay such sum to the State in twenty equal annual instalments, in six per cent. bonds of the United States. The sum thus given, as to *time* and *manner*, I think, would not be half as onerous as would be an equal sum raised *now* for the indefinite prosecution of the war; but of this you can judge as well as I.

Lincoln to McDougall, March 14, 1862. MS.

It was between the dates of these letters that President Lincoln made the most important personal effort to secure favorable action on his project of gradual abolishment. At his request such Members of Congress from the border slave States of Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri as were present in Washington came in a body to the Executive Mansion on March 10, where a somewhat prolonged discussion of this subject ensued, the substance of which was authentically reported by them. In reading the account of the interview, it must be remembered that Lincoln was

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CHAP. XII. addressing the representatives of such slave States as had remained loyal, and his phrases respecting his attitude and intention towards slavery were not intended by him to apply to the States whose persistent rebellion had forfeited the consideration and rights which the others could justly claim. Mr. Crisfield thus relates the substance of the President's address:

> After the usual salutations and we were seated, the President said, in substance, that he had invited us to meet him to have some conversation with us in explanation of his message of the 6th; that since he had sent it in, several of the gentlemen then present had visited him, but had avoided any allusion to the message, and he therefore inferred that the import of the message had been misunderstood, and was regarded as inimical to the interests we represented; and he had resolved he would talk with us, and disabuse our minds of that erroneous opinion. The President then disclaimed any intent to injure the interests or wound the sensibilities of the slave States. On the contrary, his purpose was to protect the one and respect the other. That we were engaged in a terrible, wasting, and tedious war; immense armies were in the field, and must continue in the field as long as the war lasts; that these armies must, of necessity, be brought into contact with slaves in the States we represented, and in other States as they advanced; that slaves would come to the camps, and continual irritation was kept up. That he was constantly annoyed by conflicting and antagonistic complaints: on the one side, a certain class complained if the slave was not protected by the army — persons were frequently found who, participating in these views, acted in a way unfriendly to the slaveholder; on the other hand, slaveholders complained that their rights were interfered with, their slaves induced to abscond and protected within the lines. These complaints were numerous, loud, and deep; were a serious annoyance to him, and embarrassing to the progress of the war; that it kept alive a spirit hostile to the Govern-

ment in the States we represented; strengthened the hopes of the Confederates that at some day the border States would unite with them and thus tend to prolong the war; and he was of the opinion, if this resolution should be adopted by Congress and accepted by our States, these causes of irritation and these hopes would be removed, and more would be accomplished towards shortening the war than could be hoped from the greatest victory achieved by Union armies. That he made this proposition in good faith, and desired it to be accepted, if at all, voluntarily, and in the same patriotic spirit in which it was made; that emancipation was a subject exclusively under the control of the States, and must be adopted or rejected by each for itself; that he did not claim, nor had this Government any right to coerce them for that purpose; that such was no part of his purpose in making this proposition, and he wished it to be clearly understood. That he did not expect us there to be prepared to give him an answer, but he hoped we would take the subject into serious consideration, confer with one another, and then take such course as we felt our duty and the interests of our constituents required of us. CHAP. XII.

McPherson, "History of the Rebellion," p. 210 *et seq.*

It is not to be wondered at that his auditors were unable to give him affirmative replies, or even remote encouragement. Representing slaveholding constituencies, their natural attitude was one of unyielding conservatism. Their whole tone was one of doubt, of qualified protest, and of apprehensive inquiry. They had not failed to note that in his annual message of December 3, and his special message of March 6, he had announced his determination to use all "indispensable means" to preserve the Union, and had hinted that necessity might force him to employ extreme measures; and one of them asked pointedly "if the President looked to any policy beyond the acceptance or rejection of this scheme." His answer was frank and direct. 1861. 1862

CHAP. XII. Mr. Crisfield of Maryland writes: "The President replied that he had no designs beyond the action of the States on this particular subject. He should lament their refusal to accept it, but he had no designs beyond their refusal of it. . . Unless he was expelled by the act of God or the Confederate armies, he should occupy that house for three years, and as long as he remained there Maryland had nothing to fear, either for her institutions or her interests, on the points referred to."

McPherson, "History of the Rebellion," p. 211.

The day on which this interview was held, Roscoe Conkling introduced into the House of Representatives the exact joint resolution which the President had recommended in his message of the 6th, and debate on the subject was begun. The discussion showed a wide divergence of views among Representatives. Moderate Republicans generally supported the resolution; even pronounced anti-slavery men, such as Lovejoy in the House and Sumner in the Senate, indicated their willingness to join in the liberal compensation the President had proposed, if the loyal slave States would consent to relinquish their portion of the disturbing and dangerous evil. Since it was not a practical measure, but simply an announcement of policy, the opposition was not strenuous; a few border State Representatives and the more obstinate Democrats from free States joined in a somewhat ill-natured dissent. The resolution was passed on the following day (yeas, 89; nays, 31). The action of the Senate was very similar, though the debate was a little more delayed. The resolution was passed in that body April 2 (yeas, 32; nays, 10), and received the President's signature on the 10th of April, 1862.

By his initiative and influence Mr. Lincoln thus committed the executive and legislative departments of the Government to the policy of compensated emancipation; and there is no doubt that, had his generous offer been accepted by the border States within a reasonable time, the pledge embodied in the joint resolution would have been promptly redeemed. Though it afterwards turned out that this action remained only sentimental and prospective, it nevertheless had no inconsiderable effect in bringing to pass a very important practical measure.

In its long contest for political supremacy, slavery had clung with unyielding tenacity to its foothold in the District of Columbia, where it had been the most irritating eyesore to Northern opinion. Whatever might be conceded to the doctrine of State sovereignty, antislavery men felt that the peculiar institution had no claim to the exclusive shelter of the Federal flag; on the other hand, pro-slavery men saw that to relinquish this claim would be fatal to their determination to push it to national recognition. Hence the abolition or the maintenance of slavery in the District of Columbia had become a frequent issue in party politics. The prohibition of the slave-trade in the District was indeed effected in the great compromise of 1850; but this concession was more than counterbalanced by the pro-slavery gains of that political bargain, and since then the abolition of slavery itself in this central Federal jurisdiction seemed to have become impossible until rebellion provoked the change. Under the new conditions antislavery zeal was pushing its lance into every joint of the monster's

CHAP. XII. armor, and this vulnerable point was not overlooked. The Constitution placed the District of Columbia exclusively under the legislation of Congress, and by their rebellious withdrawal from their seats in the two Houses the Southern Senators and Representatives had voluntarily surrendered this citadel of their propagandism.

President Lincoln had not specifically recommended abolishment in the District in his annual message; but he had introduced a bill for such a purpose when he was a Member of Congress in 1849, and it was well known that his views had undergone no change. Later on, the already re-
1862. cited special message of March 6 embraced the subject in its larger aspects and recommendations. Thus, with perfect knowledge that it would receive Executive sanction, the Senate on April 3 (yeas, 29; nays, 14), and the House on April 11 (yeas, 92; nays, 38), passed an act of immediate emancipation of the slaves in the District of Columbia, with compensation to the owners, to be distributed by a commission, the whole not to exceed an aggregate of $300 per slave. The act also appropriated the sum of $100,000 for expenses of voluntary emigration to Hayti or Liberia.

President Lincoln signed the act on the 16th of
1862. April, and in his short message of approval said: "I have never doubted the constitutional authority of Congress to abolish slavery in this District; and I have ever desired to see the national capital freed from the institution in some satisfactory way. Hence there has never been in my mind any question upon the subject except the one of expediency, arising in view of all the circumstances. . . I am

gratified that the two principles of compensation and colonization are both recognized and practically applied in the act." Certain omissions in the law, which the President pointed out, were remedied by supplementary enactments, which among other provisions added to the boon of freedom the privilege of education by opening public schools to colored children.

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"Globe," April 16, 1862, p. 1680.

CHAPTER XIII

"MONITOR" AND "MERRIMAC"

CH. XIII. IN a great war such as that of the rebellion an inventive people like the Americans could not fail to originate novelties and develop progress in methods of fighting. The most critical point of the contest on both sides was the possibility of foreign intervention. This compelled the North to find effective means to enforce the long and difficult sea-coast blockade; while for the South it constituted a prime object to break it. Both sides therefore turned eagerly to experiments in the new system of iron-clad ships. In the destruction of the Gosport navy yard at the outbreak of the war, the United States steam-frigate *Merrimac* was burned to the water's edge and sunk. The rebels soon raised her, and finding her hull undamaged, and the engines yet serviceable, they proceeded by help of the Tredegar iron-works, at Richmond, to convert her into an ironclad. A wedge-shaped prow of cast-iron, weighing 1500 pounds, was fastened to the stem two feet under water, and projecting about two feet in front. A roof of wood two feet thick, with its sides inclining at thirty-six degrees to the water's edge, was made to cover about two-thirds of the hull, being the central

part; this was plated with iron armor composed of two plates, each two inches thick. Within this protection was placed a battery of ten guns, four on each broadside, and one each at the stem and stern.

Ch. XIII. Catesby Ap R. Jones, in "The Southern Magazine," Dec., 1874, pp. 200, 201.

The Navy Department at Washington was no less prompt to study the question of ironclads. The special session of Congress appropriated one and a half million of dollars for the work. A public advertisement invited plans and offers of construction. A competent board of naval officers examined the devices presented, and recommended three of the most promising, which by way of trial were put under contract. "Our immediate demands," said their report, "seem to require, first, so far as practicable, vessels invulnerable to shot, of light draft of water, to penetrate our shoal harbors, rivers, and bayous." Of the three plans adopted the one presented by John Ericsson of New York, a Swede by birth but an American citizen by adoption, a man of original genius, of great scientific acquirements, and of long experience in engineering service, proved in the end to conform best to these requirements. The board had doubts of its sea-going qualities, but at once recognized it as "a plan which will render the battery shot and shell proof." The hull, 127 feet long, 36 feet wide, and 12 feet deep, was covered by a flat, overhanging deck, slightly wider but much longer, pointed at both ends, closed and made water-tight, and rising only one or two feet above the water-line. On this stood a revolving turret, twenty feet in diameter and nine feet high, composed of wrought-iron plates bolted together to a total

Joseph Smith, H. Paulding, C. H. Davis, Report, Sept. 16, 1861. "Armored Vessels," pp. 2-7.

CH. XIII. thickness of eight inches. Inside this were two 11-inch Dahlgren guns, trained side by side and revolving with the turret. Ericsson named his novel ship the *Monitor*. When public humor afterwards christened his invention by calling it a "cheese-box on a raft," the designation expressed the exact intention of his model. In observing the movements of timber-rafts down the Norwegian coast, he had noticed that they suffered no danger from the waves, which simply rolled over them. So the closed platform of the *Monitor*, which would permit the waves to roll freely over its surface, required only its comparatively thin edge above and below the water-line to be protected with heavy iron armor. By this clever device, weight, which is the main difficulty in armored ships, was reduced to a minimum, and enabled him to combine great thickness of mail with the utmost lightness of draft.

Information concerning the progress of the work on these first American ironclads reached both belligerents. The officers at Fort Monroe reported in October, 1861, that the *Merrimac* (she was named the *Virginia* by the rebels) would probably make an effort to get to sea. This proved a premature rumor. Late in the following February the Navy Department had more trustworthy information, through a Union mechanic then at work upon her, that she was nearly finished. The rebels doubtless had similar information concerning the ironclads building at the North. But in each case such clandestine knowledge was necessarily vague and fragmentary. Enough, however, was known in Washington to make it probable that the *Merrimac*

Wool to Gen. Scott, Oct. 6, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 620.

Welles in "Annals of the War," p. 20.

would prove formidable in a naval contest. Delay had occurred in the work on the Union ironclads, the time of their possible presence there could not be fixed with certainty, and their ability to meet such an antagonist was purely a matter of speculation. When the *Monitor* was recommended by the Naval Board, and put under contract, even the most experienced and most sanguine officers had no expectation of the remarkable fighting powers she afterwards demonstrated. CH. XIII.

On Thursday night, the 6th of March, 1862, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy was called to a council of war then being held at the Executive Mansion, at which the President, Cabinet, and various military officers were present. The Peninsular Campaign had been substantially agreed upon, but its details were yet under discussion. President Lincoln once more explained that taking the whole army first to Annapolis, to be embarked in transports, would appear to the extremely sensitive and impatient public opinion very much like a retreat from Washington. It would be impolitic to explain that it was merely a first step by way of the Chesapeake Bay and Fort Monroe towards Richmond. Could not, he asked, 50,000 or even 10,000 men be moved in transports directly down the Potomac? This would be a self-evident forward movement, which the public would comprehend without explanation. The objection was that transports could not safely pass existing rebel batteries on the Potomac. Could not the navy destroy those batteries? Assistant Secretary Fox replied that the navy could silence the batteries, but that unless held by our army, they

Fox, Conversation. J. G. N., Personal Memoranda. MS.

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would immediately be reoccupied, rebuilt, and again armed and manned by the rebels, and we needed a prolonged not a temporary respite.

The army officers objected that to occupy, hold, and defend those batteries from land attacks would produce a local and partial movement and diversion only to cripple and delay the main and distant expedition. Lincoln finally decided that the navy should in any event engage and silence the Potomac batteries, even if only for a temporary and moral effect. There being as yet no telegraph to Fort Monroe, orders were transmitted by sea directing that certain ships of war, and the *Monitor* which that day sailed from New York, should ascend the Potomac for this duty. The *Merrimac* was for the moment forgotten, but being remembered next day, supplementary orders were sent directing a suspension of action till Assistant Secretary Fox could visit Fort Monroe and consult the naval officers in command. When he arrived there on Sunday morning, an important naval engagement had occurred, the renewal and conclusion of which he witnessed.

Welles to Paulding, March 6, 1862, and Welles to Marston, March 7, 1862. W. R. Vol. IX., pp. 17, 18.

Welles to Marston, March 8, 1862. W. R. Vol. IX., p. 18.

Three Union frigates lay at anchor under the guns of Fort Monroe, and two others under the guns of the Union earthworks near Newport News, six miles to the southwest, when on Saturday, March 8, about noon, the *Merrimac* appeared in the mouth of the Elizabeth River channel, which enters Hampton Roads about midway between the points named above, and headed directly for Newport News. She was accompanied by two small tugs armed with one gun each, while three other side-wheel steamers out of the James River, respectively

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of one, two, and twelve guns, also joined the *Merrimac* after the attack. The ships at Fort Monroe immediately slipped their cables and started for the encounter, following the *Merrimac* towards the southwest—the *Minnesota* (twin-ship to the original *Merrimac)* under steam, the *St. Lawrence*, sailing frigate, in tow of a gunboat, and the *Roanoke*, with a broken shaft, towed by tugs. But owing to a recent northwest gale, water was low in the channel, and all of these vessels, being of deep draft, soon grounded—the *Minnesota* north of the middle ground, one and a half miles from Newport News, the *St. Lawrence* near her, and the *Roanoke* still farther behind. Beyond an occasional exchange of fire at long distances they were therefore unable to join in the main fight. The sailing frigate *Congress*, and the razeed frigate *Cumberland*, anchored at Newport News, saw the *Merrimac* coming, and prepared for action. Plowing up the bay, with her sloping roof and her low prow, she looked to them "like a huge half-submerged crocodile." Her warning shot was given when yet a mile away. Exchanging a broadside with the *Congress* as she passed her at the distance of three hundred yards, she rushed full speed at the *Cumberland*, which had opened on her with her pivot guns, and now greeted her with broadsides as she neared. But neither the broadsides of the wooden ships, nor the fire of the shore batteries, had any apparent effect. The showering iron hail glanced and bounded from the sloping, tortoise-shaped back of the leviathan like india-rubber balls. On and on she came with accelerated momentum, till within fifteen minutes after the first shot was fired she struck the *Cumberland* forward of the starboard fore-chains.

CH. XIII. Buchanan Report, March 27, 1862. W. R. Vol. IX., p. 8.

March 8, 1862.

CH. XIII. Jones, in "The Southern Magazine," Dec., 1874, p. 202.

The crash of her iron prow through the timbers and hull "was distinctly heard above the din of battle." The attacked vessel was forced back upon her anchors with great violence, and a hole the size of a hogshead was opened in the hull, into which the water rushed in a deluge. Pumps were of no avail against such a flood, and the good ship was doomed. And, besides this, the shells of her iron-cased destroyer were spreading death on her decks. As she backed away but yet hovered over her victim at convenient nearness, her guns continued to belch forth irresistible havoc.

History records no more determined bravery than was displayed by the officers and crew of the *Cumberland.* Neither present disaster nor impending danger checked their devoted heroism. With men cut down at their guns, and the ship settling to her fate under their feet, they answered broadside with broadside, shot with shot. When the water in the hold rose and drowned the forward magazine, they still passed up powder from the one aft. The last gun was fired when the sea was already running into the muzzle of the gun beside it. After three-quarters of an hour of such fighting the gallant ship, with the dead and wounded of her crew, and some even of her heroic defenders who clung doggedly to their posts after orders had been given to save themselves, went to the bottom in fifty feet of water with the stars and stripes still flying from her masthead. Her antagonist did not come from the encounter entirely unharmed. The blow which sunk the *Cumberland* wrenched off her iron prow and slightly twisted her stem. The *Cumberland's* solid shot broke the muzzles of two of her guns

Morris, Report. Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. IV., Documents, p. 269.

March 8, 1862.

Jones, in "The Southern Magazine," Dec., 1874, p. 202.

John S Worden

and killed two of her men, wounding nineteen others. CH. XIII.

Ebb tide having begun, the *Merrimac* steamed a short distance up stream to turn, and then attacked the *Congress* which lay several hundred yards east of the *Cumberland.* The *Congress*, seeing the fate of her companion, slipped her cable, and by using her sails, and with the help of a tug, ran ashore and grounded where the iron monster could not follow. But the precaution was futile. The *Merrimac*, returning, took up a raking position off her quarter at two cables' length, soon silenced the few guns that bore upon her, and after an hour's fight, creating frightful carnage, the commander having been killed and the ship set on fire in several places, the *Congress* struck her colors. Confederate officers charge that fire was again opened from the *Congress* after surrender, which Union officers deny. The conflict of assertion is probably explained by the circumstance that fire was opened upon the rebel boats from the shore with both cannon and musketry, a proceeding perfectly justifiable by the laws of war. The event caused the *Merrimac* to open once more on the *Congress* with hot shot and incendiary shells, and whether from these or other causes she burned till midnight, when the explosion of her magazine ended the conflagration. The *Merrimac*, with her consorts, withdrew from the field of conflict, firing at both the *Minnesota* and *St. Lawrence* as they passed down the channel at the distance of a mile, but the *Merrimac* offered no serious attack, probably expecting to capture them the following day. At nightfall the rebel flotilla anchored under the guns of their shore batteries on

Jones in "The Southern Magazine," Dec., 1874, and Pendergrast, Report. Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. IV., Documents, pp. 269, 270. Mansfield, Report, March 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. IX., pp. 4, 5.

CH. XIII. Sewall's Point at the entrance of the channel to Norfolk, whence they had come. Among the Union commanders the gloomy disasters of the afternoon were heightened by the seemingly hopeless apprehension for the morrow. With great difficulty the tugs had hauled the *Roanoke* and *St. Lawrence* back to Fort Monroe; the *Minnesota* was hard aground. But what ship, ashore or afloat, could stand before this new and terrible marine engine, that moved unharmed through the repeated broadsides of the most powerful naval armaments?

March 9, 1862. Telegraphic news of these events reached Washington the next morning, Sunday, and the hasty meeting of the Cabinet and other officials who immediately gathered at the White House was perhaps the most excited and impressive of the whole war. Stanton, unable to control his strong emotion, walked up and down the room like a caged lion. McClellan was dumfounded and silent. Lincoln was, as usual in trying moments, composed but eagerly inquisitive, critically scanning the dispatches, interrogating the officers, joining scrap to scrap of information, applying his searching analysis and clear logic to read the danger and find the remedy; Chase impatient and ready to utter blame; Seward and Welles hopeful, yet without encouraging reasons to justify their hope. The possibilities of the hour were indeed sufficiently portentous to create consternation. What might not this new and irresistible leviathan of the deep accomplish? A fleet destroyed; Fort Monroe besieged; the blockade broken; the Richmond campaign thwarted; New York laid under contribution; Washington City and the public build-

Welles, in "Annals of the War," pp. 24, 25.

ings burned and the Government in flight;[1] foreign intervention would surely follow a succession of events like these, which heated imagination easily called up. Even at the risk of creating a momentary panic it seemed necessary to warn the authorities of the seaboard cities to prepare all possible resources of their own for defense. The best available provision to make Washington City secure, that could be suggested, was to prepare and load barges and canal-boats to be sunk in the channel of the Potomac at Kettlebottom Shoals and other points. Quartermaster-General Meigs and Captain Dahlgren were charged by the Secretary of War with this duty. Since guns were of no avail against the *Merrimac*, it was decided to have recourse to her own process of ramming. For this purpose the strongest and swiftest merchant steamer in New York, the *Vanderbilt*, was chartered, strengthened by filling her bow with timbers and plating it outside with iron, and sent to Fort Monroe under orders to try to run down her antagonist, at the first opportunity, and at whatever risk. But more effective help had arrived, and even while these counsels were in progress, was bringing the question to a practical solution. By the light of the burning *Congress*, on Saturday night a rebel pilot saw a strange craft glide into the waters of Hampton Roads; it was the *Monitor*, which, safely towed from New York, arrived between nine and ten o'clock. So little was the new system and model in favor, that the

Jones, in "The Southern Magazine," Dec., 1874, p. 204.

[1] Mr. Welles, who was in the habit of coldly noting in his deadly diary all the indiscretions of his colleagues, says that Mr. Stanton closed his list of sinister prophecies by predicting that a shell or a cannon-shot from the *Merrimac* would probably land in the Cabinet-room before they separated.

CH. XIII. older officers of the navy had generally condemned it in advance and manifested no ambition to command her. Lieutenant John L. Worden, however, had accepted the duty, and was immediately informed that a critical trial was at hand. A little after midnight he moved to a station near the *Minnesota*, which was still aground.

Worden to Welles, March 8, 1862. "Armored Vessels," p. 14.

Van Brunt to Welles, March 10, 1862. Ibid., p. 18.

On Sunday morning, March 9, the *Merrimac* once more came out and steamed towards the *Minnesota*, with the expectation of easily capturing or destroying her, but as she approached the *Monitor* went out to meet her. "The contrast was that of a pigmy to a giant." The *Merrimac* was twice her length and breadth, had more than four times her displacement, and five times as many guns. But her great draft, twenty-two feet, confined her manœuvres to deep water, while the *Monitor* drawing only ten feet could run where she pleased. The huge tortoise-back of the *Merrimac* was an easy target, while her broadsides passed harmlessly over the low, flat deck of the *Monitor*, only one or two feet above water. The shore spectators now witnessed a prolonged and exciting naval duel. The small rebel gunboats withdrew. The *Merrimac* occasionally exchanged fire with the *Minnesota*, but her principal fight was with the *Monitor*. The two ironclads moved fearlessly towards each other, firing as favorable opportunity offered. But the nine-inch and eleven-inch shells glanced without effect alike from the sloping roof of the *Merrimac* and the round side of the *Monitor's* tower. The superior mobility of the latter proved a great advantage. "She and her turret," says the rebel commander, "appeared to be under perfect control. Her light

Van Brunt, Report, March 10, 1862. Ibid. Jones, in "The Southern Magazine," Dec., 1874, p. 201.

draft enabled her to move about us at pleasure. She once took position for a short time where we could not bring a gun to bear on her. Another of her movements caused us great anxiety: she made for our rudder and propeller, both of which could have been easily disabled. We could only see her guns when they were discharged; immediately afterwards the turret revolved rapidly, and the guns were not again seen until they were again fired. . . When we saw that our fire made no impression on the *Monitor* we determined to run into her, if possible. We found it a very difficult feat to do. Our great length and draft, in a comparatively narrow channel with but little water to spare, made us sluggish in our movements and hard to steer and turn. When the opportunity presented all steam was put on; there was not, however, sufficient time to gather full headway before striking. The blow was given with the broad wooden stem, the iron prow having been lost the day before. The *Monitor* received the blow in such a manner as to weaken its effect, and the damage was to her trifling."[1]

Jones, in "The Southern Magazine," Dec., 1874, pp. 204, 205.

[1] "During the engagement, Worden had taken his place in the pilot-house, from the lookout-holes of which he was able to see the course of the action, and to direct the working of the ship and of the guns. Greene had charge of the turret and handled the battery. . . The situation in the turret was a difficult one. Shut up in a revolving iron cask on a moving platform, and cut off from the captain except through slow and imperfect communication by passing the word, when minutes and even seconds were important, Greene fought under heavy disadvantages. The direction of the bow and stern, and of the starboard and port beam, were marked on the stationary flooring, but the marks were soon obliterated, and after one or two revolutions it was impossible to guess at the direction of the ship or the position of the enemy. The only openings through which anything could be seen were the gun-ports; and these were closed except at the moment of firing, as an entering shot would have disabled the guns. Curiously enough, neither of the

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Three hours passed in this singular contest. The *Monitor* had fired forty-one shots. She inflicted no direct damage, neither did she receive any. On both sides the shells only made slight indentations in the thick iron armor. Yet it was apparent to the rebel officers that the little "cheese-box on a raft" was gradually wearing out her bulky antagonist. It became evident that if the *Merrimac* were by accident struck twice in the same place, her shield would be penetrated. She was already leaking badly. Her loss of prow, anchor, and consumption of coal was raising her so as dangerously to expose her water-line, where the iron plating was only one inch thick; a chance shot here would send her to the bottom. But at this time the *Monitor* met with a serious accident. Her pilot-house was constructed of great iron logs, nine by twelve inches thick, laid up after the manner of a log-cabin, leaving spaces of half an inch between them, through which to observe the enemy and steer the ship. Lieutenant Worden, the commander, was standing in this pilot-house giving orders, when one of the *Merrimac's* shells struck the outside of the logs between which he was looking. The concussion drove the smoke and iron-dust through with such force as temporarily to blind him, disabling him from command, and causing a short suspension of all guidance of the *Monitor* until he could be properly cared for. When, however, after the lapse of some twenty

Jones, in "The Southern Magazine," Dec., 1874, pp. 205, 206.

Stimers to Ericsson, March 9, 1862. Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. IV., Documents, pp. 270, 271.

port-stoppers was struck, though the edges of the ports and the turret-wall between them were jagged and dented by the *Merrimac's* shot. At last the difficulties became so great, the revolutions so confusing, and the mechanism governing the movements of the turret so little under control, that it was left stationary, and the ship was fought and the guns pointed by the helm."—J. R. Soley, "The Blockade and the Cruisers," pp. 69, 70.

minutes, Lieutenant Greene, the second officer, who had by Worden's direction assumed command, turned his vessel again to face his antagonist, he saw that the *Merrimac* had already started in the direction of Elizabeth River. He fired a few shots after her, but she continued her retreat, refusing further combat. CH. XIII.

Greene, in "The Century," March, 1885, pp. 761, 762. Jones, in "The Southern Magazine," Dec., 1874, p. 205.

If, as the rebel commander states, the *Merrimac* was yet willing to have continued the fight, she was equally ready to consent to its cessation. Making no further effort to shell the *Minnesota*, which still lay aground within easy reach of her guns, she quit the waters of Hampton Roads at noon, three hours before high water, and steamed back to Norfolk whence she had come. In reality the contest had been decided by the evident prospective superiority of the *Monitor* rather than by any present necessity of either combatant. Counted merely by blows received and given it was a drawn battle. But, practically, a victory, which seemed providential in its sudden relief and immense results, remained with the *Monitor*. The whole event was even still broader in its effect. That three hours' battle in Hampton Roads changed the naval warfare of the civilized world. A quarter of a century has elapsed and still the great powers of Europe are testing the yet unsolved problem of the largest gun to destroy, and the strongest armor to protect, a ship-of-war.

March 9, 1862.

The welcome news reached the Washington authorities that same night by the newly laid telegraph, changing deep anxiety into lively exultation. Lincoln, always prudent, at once saw clearly the immense value of the *Monitor's* victory, and resolved

CH. XIII. Welles to Fox, March 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. IX., p. 25.

it should not be placed in jeopardy. He therefore sent orders that she should not be unduly exposed, and that on no account should she attempt to go to Norfolk alone. The preparations for blocking the Potomac channel were completed and held in constant readiness, and several additional swift merchant vessels were soon after stationed at Fort Monroe to make the destruction of the *Merrimac* reasonably sure by running her down. It turned out that she was never in a condition to go to sea, and that her great draft prevented her ascending the Potomac. After the Peninsular Campaign was begun, there was always an immense number of Union transports in the adjacent waters, to which she could have done incalculable damage. For about two months she thus remained a vague terror, though the menace was effectually "neutralized" by the *Monitor* and the merchant war vessels assembled in triple and quadruple force to oppose and annihilate her. On her part the *Merrimac* profited by the blockade to which she was subjected, by being repaired and much strengthened, by a new steel and wrought-iron prow, by iron plating on her hull, and improved ammunition. On the 11th of April she descended again to Hampton Roads, in company with three rebel gunboats and nine small tugs. But beyond getting the various unarmed vessels out of the way the Union fleet made no movement; for its orders provided that the *Monitor* and other vessels should not be separated, but that if the *Merrimac* came out into favorable waters they should all go at her. "The position is one of defiance on both sides," wrote a newspaper correspondent; "the rebels are challenging us to

HAMPTON
HAMPTON ROADS
CHESAPEAKE BAY
JAMES RIVER
LINE OF 18 FEET DEPTH OF WATER
NEWPORT NEWS
OLD POINT COMFORT
FORTRESS MONROE
ST. LAWRENCE
ROANOKE
RIP RAPS
MINNESOTA
MONITOR
CUMBERLAND
CONGRESS
MERRIMAC
MARCH 9
MIDDLE GROUND
SEWELL'S POINT
WILLOUGHBY'S BAY
CRANEY ISLAND FLATS
ELIZABETH RIVER
NANSEMOND RIVER
CRANEY ISLAND
NORFOLK
PORTSMOUTH
GOSPORT NAVY YARD
MAP OF
HAMPTON ROADS
AND VICINITY
SCALE
YARDS
MILES

e page 232.

come up to their field of battle, and we are daring them to come down." The Union fleet understood too well its primary duty of keeping the *Merrimac* from any possibility of reaching the army transports in York River, while on their part the rebel officers were also restrained by orders to remain for the protection of Norfolk.[1] No battle grew out of this game of strategy, and at night the rebel vessels withdrew.

We must anticipate somewhat the chronological order of events to bring within the present chapter the final fate of both the *Monitor* and *Merrimac*. In the progress of the Peninsular Campaign, when the Confederates found McClellan's army advancing against Richmond in such powerful numbers, it became necessary to draw in all available detachments for the defense of their capital, and on the 1st of May the evacuation of Norfolk was determined upon. On the 4th of May the *Merrimac* was ordered to take station where she could prevent the Union forces from ascending the James River. Huger, the rebel military commander, however, obtained a postponement of this duty till his preparations for evacuation should be further advanced.

Davis to Johnston, May 1, 1862. Davis, "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government," Vol. II., p. 92.

Tatnall, Report, May 14, 1862. Moore, "Rebellion Record." Vol. V., Documents, p. 46.

[1] "On the 28th of April, General J. E. Johnston wrote to Flag-officer Tatnall, commanding the naval forces in the James River, requesting him, if practicable, to proceed with the *Virginia* to York River for the purpose of destroying the enemy's transports, to which Commodore Tatnall replied that it could only be done in daylight, when he would be exposed to the fire of the forts, and have to contend with the squadron of men-of-war stationed below them, and that if this should be safely done, according to the information derived from the pilots, it would not be possible for the *Virginia* to reach the enemy's transports at Poquosin, while the withdrawal of the *Virginia* would be to abandon the defense of Norfolk, and to remove the obstacles she opposed to 'the enemy's operations in the James River.'" —Davis, "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government." Vol. II., pp. 90, 91.

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It happened by a curious coincidence that President Lincoln, Secretary Chase, and Secretary Stanton started in the evening of the 5th of May for a visit to Fort Monroe. So far as is known it had only a general object: to ascertain by personal observation whether some further vigilance and vigor might not be infused into the operations of the army and navy at that point. Delayed by bad weather on the Potomac, they arrived at their destination on Tuesday night, May 6. Late as it was they immediately proceeded to the steamship *Minnesota*, and held a conference with Commodore L. M. Goldsborough, the flag-officer, "about the condition of things" and "military and naval movements in connection with the dreaded *Merrimac*." Next day, May 7, the party visited the various places of interest — the *Vanderbilt*, the *Monitor*, the ruined village of Hampton, the Rip Raps and Fort Monroe, with doubtless a running council of war among themselves and the naval and military commanders; for two important orders appear to have been given by the President that same Wednesday evening, preparations for executing which were made during the night. In pursuance of these orders, on the morning of Thursday, May 8, the new ironclad *Galena* with two other gunboats were sent up the James River; and a considerable section of the remaining fleet moved across the waters of the bay to an attack on the Confederate Sewall's Point batteries. This was a reconnaissance in force; troops were already embarked in transports to push across and effect a landing if it appeared practicable, with a view to advance on Norfolk. But the cannonade from the

Chase to his daughter, May 7, 1862. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," pp. 426, 427.

Stanton to Watson, May 8, 1862. W. R., Vol. XI., Part III., p. 153.

ships called forth a spirited reply from the rebel batteries on Sewall's Point, and after a while the *Merrimac* appeared to take part in the fray. "All the big wooden vessels," writes Chase, who with Lincoln and Stanton witnessed the bombardment from the Rip Raps, "began to haul off. The *Monitor* and *Stevens*, however, held their ground. The *Merrimac* still came on slowly, and in a little while there was a clear sheet of water between her and the *Monitor*. Then the great rebel terror paused, then turned back, and having finally attained what she considered a safe position, became stationary again." CH. XIII.

Chase to his daughter, May 8, 1862. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 428.

"That was thought to have shown the inability of an attempt to land at Sewall's Point while the *Merrimac* lay watching it," says Chase, in another letter, and the troops were disembarked from the transports. But all this commotion had stirred up inquiry and elicited information; and a pilot suggested that a landing might be found to the eastward beyond Willoughby Point. Against the general incredulity of the officers, Chase on Friday morning, May 9, took the revenue cutter *Miami*, on which the party had come from Washington, and a tug, and went on a reconnaissance to the shore indicated. Here, some five or six miles from Fort Monroe, soundings disclosed a feasible landing, undefended by batteries or even pickets, and a boat sent ashore obtained valuable information of passable roads leading to Norfolk. "When I got back to Fort Monroe," continues Chase, "I found the President had been listening to a pilot and studying a chart, and had become impressed with a conviction that there was a nearer landing and

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wished to go and see about it on the spot. So we started again and soon reached the shore, taking with us a large boat and some twenty armed soldiers from the Rip Raps. The President and Mr. Stanton were on the tug and I on the *Miami.* The tug was of course nearest shore, and as soon as she found the water too shoal for her to go farther safely, the Rip Raps boat was manned and sent in. . . We had again found a good landing, which at the time I supposed to be between two and three miles nearer Fort Monroe, but which proved to be only one-half or three-quarters of a mile nearer."

Chase to his daughter, May 11, 1862. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," pp. 428–430.

It is probable that these opportune discoveries were supplemented by other important information. On the previous evening (of Thursday) a Norfolk tug-boat seized the favorable opportunity to desert from the rebel service and run into Newport News. Its officers reported that Norfolk was being evacuated by the Confederates, and that the two or three thousand troops yet there would probably soon be gone. When therefore the officials and officers were once more assembled at Fort Monroe, an immediate advance to Norfolk was agreed upon, and troops were again embarked on transports and other preparations hurried forward on Friday night.

On Saturday morning, May 10, a successful landing and debarkation was effected at the point examined by the President, and General Wool marched to Norfolk with a force of nearly six thousand men. It is easy to glean from the various accounts that there was great want of foresight and confusion in all the military arrangements, and the Secretary of the Treasury, who accompanied the

advance, was probably gratified by the entirely unexpected rôle of being for once in his life the generalissimo of a military campaign. They met only the merest show of resistance and delay at a burning bridge, which was overcome by an easy detour. By evening they passed through the strong but abandoned intrenchments and received from the Mayor of Norfolk the official surrender of the city. The navy yard at Gosport was in flames, but the heavy guns which armed the earthworks remained as trophies. A military governor was appointed, and protection promised to peaceful inhabitants, and from that time forward Norfolk remained under the authority of the Union flag. The most substantial fruit of the movement soon followed. The officers of the *Merrimac* observed on Saturday morning, from their moorings in the mouth of Elizabeth River, that the Confederate flag was no longer flying over the Sewall's Point batteries; and investigation during the day proved the landing and march of the Union forces, the precipitate retreat of the rebel troops from all points, and the final surrender and occupation of Norfolk. The unwieldy crocodile-back ironclad was thus caught between two fires. "The ship," reports her commander, "was accordingly put on shore, as near the mainland in the vicinity of Craney Island as possible, and the crew landed. She was then fired, and after burning fiercely, fore and aft, for upward of an hour, blew up a little before five on the morning of the 11th."

Egbert L. Viele, in "Scribner's Monthly," Oct., 1878.

Tatnall, Report, May 14, 1862. Moore, "Rebellion Record," Vol. V., Documents, p. 47.

The President receiving the welcome news at the moment of departure for Washington, prolonged his stay to accompany the delighted dignitaries

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and officers on a flying trip up Elizabeth River to the newly captured town, and then the prow of the *Miami*, on Sunday evening, plowed past Fort Monroe and up the Potomac. "So," writes Chase in conclusion, "has ended a brilliant week's campaign of the President; for I think it quite certain that if he had not come down Norfolk would still have been in possession of the enemy, and the *Merrimac* as grim and defiant and as much a terror as ever. The whole coast is now virtually ours."[1]

Chase to his daughter, May 11, 1862. Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 432.

Like the *Merrimac* the *Monitor* also had a dramatic end. After various services she was, in the following December, sent to sea under sealed orders, and foundered in a gale off Cape Hatteras, nearly all the officers and crew, however, being saved by boats from the *Rhode Island*, which was towing her. Thus the pioneer ships of the new system of iron armor did not long survive their first famous exploit that so astounded the nations of the earth. Other Union ironclads of a different model had joined the Hampton Roads squadron before the destruction of the *Merrimac;* and before the *Monitor* went down she had given her name as a generic term to a whole fleet built after her model, her first successor, the monitor *Passaic*, having already reached the seat of war for active service.

[1] The Secretary claims too much for the expedition, in view of the fact that the evacuation of Norfolk and the destruction of the *Merrimac* had been ordered by the rebel authorities as a consequence of the evacuation of Yorktown.

CHAPTER XIV

ROANOKE ISLAND

MENTION has been made of the very peculiar sea-front of the State of North Carolina. Other States on the Atlantic have, like it, the narrow fringe of sand-bank constituting the extreme outer coast within which lies a network of inlets, islands, bayous, and rivers. But North Carolina, unlike the rest, contains behind this false coast a magnificent crescent-shaped inland sea whose sweeping outline covers more than a degree of latitude. This vast water-sheet has two separate names. The upper or northern part, called Albemarle Sound, extends sixty miles west into the mainland, with a width of fifteen miles near the ocean and tapering to a point at the entrance of the Chowan River. The lower or southern part, called Pamlico Sound, is perhaps twice as large, extending eighty miles to the southwest, having a width of from ten to thirty miles and a depth of twenty feet varied by shoals. Both sounds would probably have been combined under a single name were it not that nearly midway of the arc lies Roanoke Island, twelve miles long and three miles wide, indicating a division though by no means separating them; for their waters remain connected

CHAP. XIV. by the narrower Croatan Sound on the west and Roanoke Sound on the east of the island.

When Forts Hatteras and Clark were captured by the Union forces on the 29th of August, 1861, the Confederates fixed upon Roanoke Island as the nearest defensible point, and began the erection of batteries to hold the narrow channels. While the possession of the forts at Hatteras Inlet was of vast importance to the Union blockading fleet, it soon became evident that other lodgments must be made to afford full control of the interior waters of North Carolina. The Hatteras forts, built on the narrow banks of the outer coast-line, were not very defensible; in high water they were nearly submerged, and there was constant danger that they might be seriously damaged by the severe storms frequent on that coast. Officers of good judgment reported that they formed no suitable base for operations into the interior, and recommended the capture and occupation of Roanoke Island. Its strategic value was so evident that it needed little urging upon the attention of the Government. It would form a safe and useful base of operations; it would render blockade-running in that locality well-nigh impossible; more important than all, the complete occupation of the interior coast would open a practicable back door to Richmond. "Roanoke Island," wrote the local rebel commander, "is the key of one-third of North Carolina, and whose occupancy by the enemy would enable him to reach the great railroad from Richmond to New Orleans."

Hill to Cooper, Oct. 18, 1861. W. R. Vol. IV., p. 682.

Chance favored the gradual growth of an expedition for this work. During the summer and autumn of 1861, while McClellan was so tediously

REAR-ADMIRAL GOLDSBOROUGH.

organizing his great army, refusing to allow detachments and postponing all movements, the Potomac River fell into a condition of quasi blockade from rebel batteries hastily established at eligible points, and which, though from time to time shelled out and driven away, persistently reappeared to endanger navigation. "For several months," says the report of the Secretary of the Navy, "the commerce on this important avenue to the national capital was almost entirely suspended, though at no time was the passage of our armed naval vessels prevented." General McClellan felt unwilling or unable to relieve this stress by a forward movement. Yet not entirely insensible to such a military disgrace almost at the tent-doors of the army, he took refuge in a half-way measure suggested by General Ambrose E. Burnside, his classmate and intimate friend, and recommended the formation of a "coast division" with suitable vessels such as might be enlisted and collected from the various sea-coast towns of New England; the officers and men to be sufficiently conversant with boat service to manage steamers, sailing vessels, surf-boats, etc.; in short, to be as expert in the duty of the sailor as of the soldier; the whole to form an integral part of the Army of the Potomac, but specially intended for operation in the inlets of the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River. It was in the day of McClellan's highest popularity, when the Government eagerly gratified his slightest wish; accordingly General Burnside was sent to carry out his own suggestion and succeeded without difficulty in raising the desired force. CHAP. XIV.

The selection of commander was not injudicious;

CHAP. XIV. Burnside was a Rhode Islander and also a graduate of West Point, who had hitherto been singularly favored in attracting popular admiration and applause. The Governors of the States to which he was sent seconded his mission with praiseworthy zeal. Before he had finished his task wider designs were matured by the Government, and he was intrusted with the more important duty of leading his amphibious coast division to the waters of North Carolina. His regiments began assembling at Annapolis early in November, but, incurring the usual delays, the month of December passed before his whole force proceeded to his second rendezvous at Fort Monroe in complete preparation to set sail. Here also he was joined by a fleet of twenty vessels of war, under command of Flag-officer Goldsborough, detailed to accompany and assist him. General McClellan gave Burnside his final orders on January 7, 1862, directing him to assume command of the Department of North Carolina, which had been created, including the Hatteras forts. His instructions were to first seize and hold Roanoke Island, then to capture New Berne, next to attempt the capture of Fort Macon and open the harbor of Beaufort; also, if possible, to penetrate into the interior from New Berne and seize the railroad at Goldsboro'. The whole expedition went to sea from Fort Monroe on the evening of January 11, 1862. Burnside's army numbered a total of 12,829 men, divided into three brigades respectively under Generals John G. Foster, Jesse L. Reno, and John G. Parke. These with their supplies were embarked on a motley collection of transports, about a hundred in number — steamers, schooners, tug-

Goldsborough, Report, Jan. 23, 1862.

W. R. Vol. IX., p. 358.

boats, every description of craft that was deemed seaworthy, and which could be made useful in the shallow North Carolina sounds. The whole fleet sailed under sealed orders, which were opened when the vessels were twenty miles from Fort Monroe. CHAP. XIV

It was only a favorable day's run from the rendezvous to the Hatteras forts, and during that part of the voyage the fleet had the benefit of good weather; but before the ships began to assemble, the sea was so boisterous that there was great difficulty in passing through Hatteras Inlet. Some seventy of the vessels managed to get in behind the comparative shelter of the outer coast; the others were compelled to encounter the fury of a storm which set in, and which, the general states, continued almost incessantly twenty-eight days. Three steamers and half a dozen sailing vessels were lost, but, strange to say, only three lives. The remaining ships were, by great exertion, got through the Inlet a few days after the arrival. Once inside, another trouble was at hand. A difficult bar called the Bulkhead, with only seven and a half feet of water, had to be crossed; and nearly a month of delay occurred in getting the expedition over this obstruction. On the 6th of February the fleet renewed its advance; numbering seventeen ships-of-war, carrying forty-eight guns and 7500 troops. The remainder of the force was left behind at Hatteras. The thirty-eight miles of intervening distance were soon passed over; on the evening of February 7 the men-of-war engaged the shore batteries on Roanoke Island. During the long delay in the advance, the enemy had become thoroughly

Burnside, Testimony, March 19, 1863. Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

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CHAP. XIV. informed of the expected attack, and strengthened their position by every available device.

At best, however, it proved what the rebel commander called it, an unequal conflict. The principal defenses consisted of several strong forts on the northern end of the island; a row of piles and sunken vessels to obstruct the ship-channel in Croatan Sound; and a fleet of seven rebel gunboats stationed behind it. While Goldsborough with his war vessels was engaging these on the afternoon of the 7th, the army division was landed without serious resistance near Ashby's harbor, midway of the island. The island is long and narrow and a principal road runs along the middle of it from south to north. Not far above the landing-place what were supposed to be impenetrable swamps approached the road on either side, leaving it a mere causeway. Across this causeway the rebels erected a strong breastwork and rifle-pits to the right and left. A force of infantry, variously estimated at from one to two thousand, supported this apparently serious obstruction. Early on the morning of the 8th the Union troops advanced up the road; Foster, the senior brigadier-general, in the center, Parke on the right, and Reno on the left. While Foster engaged the main work at the causeway with field-pieces, the other brigade commanders respectively undertook to flank it, through the swamps to the right and the left. Two hours passed in this effort, and finally Reno and his men, forcing their way in the water waist-deep amid thick, tangled underbrush, succeeded in getting through the swamp on the left and opening a fire on the right and rear of the enemy's battery. Parke had also nearly suc-

February, 1862.

Reno, Report. W. R. Vol. IX., pp. 98, 99; and Foster, Report to the Committee on Conduct of the War, Nov. 2, 1865.

ceeded in turning the position on the other side. A simultaneous assault by Foster in front and Reno against the rebel right drove the enemy from their guns in precipitate confusion. It was a victory of persistent and stubborn energy rather than severe fighting. The total loss on the Union side was five officers and thirty-two men killed and ten officers and two hundred and four men wounded. The reported rebel loss was twenty-three killed and fifty-eight wounded.

W. R. Vol. IX., p. 85. Report, Investigating Committee of Confederate House of Representatives. W. R. Vol. IX., p. 186.

The battle at this point decided the fate of the island. The Union troops followed the retreating enemy to the northern end with such promptness and vigor that they had no time or opportunity for further resistance. The garrisons abandoned the forts and joined the flying column. Having no transports at hand in which to escape, and finding himself surrounded, Colonel Shaw, the rebel commander, sent a flag of truce to make a complete surrender. "The fruits of the day's fight," says Foster's report, "were the whole island of Roanoke with its five forts, thirty-two guns, 3000 stands of arms, and 2700 prisoners." Ex-Governor Henry A. Wise, of Virginia, upon whom, as district commander, the responsibility of this Confederate disaster fell most heavily at the time, made the following striking summary of the strategic importance of the capture of Roanoke Island. "It unlocked two sounds (Albemarle and Currituck), eight rivers (the North, West, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Little, Chowan, Roanoke, and Alligator), four canals (the Albemarle and Chesapeake, Dismal Swamp, Northwest, and Suffolk), and two railroads (the Petersburg and Norfolk, and the Seaboard and

Foster, Report to Committee on Conduct of the War, Nov. 2, 1865.

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Roanoke). It guarded more than four-fifths of all Norfolk's supplies of corn, pork, and forage, and it cut the command of General Huger off from all of its most efficient transportation. It endangers the subsistence of his whole army, threatens the navy yard at Gosport, and to cut off Norfolk from Richmond, and both from railroad communication with the South. It lodges the enemy in a safe harbor from the storms of Hatteras, gives them a rendezvous, and large, rich range of supplies, and the command of the seaboard from Oregon Inlet to Cape Henry."

Report, Investigating Committee of Confederate House of Representatives. W. R. Vol. IX., p. 188.

However interesting might be the detailed narrative, it would require more pages than can be devoted to it to describe how the natural fruits of the capture of Roanoke Island were in part gathered by successive expeditions within the North Carolina sounds during the remainder of the year 1862. They can only be mentioned here in the briefest possible summary. The rebel fleet which retreated was followed by a detachment of Goldsborough's ships, under Commander Rowan, into Pasquotank River towards Elizabeth City, where, on February 10, he completely annihilated it, capturing one steamer, burning and destroying five others, and occupying Elizabeth City and other points. Carrying out the original instructions, another expedition, naval and military, sailed from Roanoke Island against the town of New Berne on the Neuse River, one of the southern affluents of Pamlico Sound, where a combined attack on the 14th of March effected a quick reduction of the very considerable defenses at that place. "The fruits of the victory at New Berne," reports General

Goldsborough, Reports Feb. 14 and 20, 1862.

Burnside, Report, March 16, 1862. W. R. Vol. IX., pp. 197–199.

Foster, "were the richest town in North Carolina, one steamer, two hundred prisoners, forty-six heavy guns, eighteen field-pieces, several hundred stands of arms, the command of the railroad, the cutting off from supplies of the garrison of Fort Macon, with the prospective capture of that work, and the facilities of the railroad for our advance on Goldsboro'." A small expedition also went (March 20, 21) up the Pamlico River, where the town of Washington was occupied. More important than either of the foregoing was the expedition under command of Brigadier-General Parke against Fort Macon: guarding the harbor of Beaufort, North Carolina, and its successful investment, siege, and capture on the 26th of April — one of those brilliant engineering feats which throughout the war attested the high skill and accomplishments of the educated officers of the regular army. In addition to these principal events there occurred a score or more of small expeditions, reconnaissances, and skirmishes, which there is not room even to enumerate.

Foster, Report to Committee on Conduct of the War, Nov. 2, 1865. Stevenson, Report, March 23, 1862. W. R. Vol. IX., p. 269.

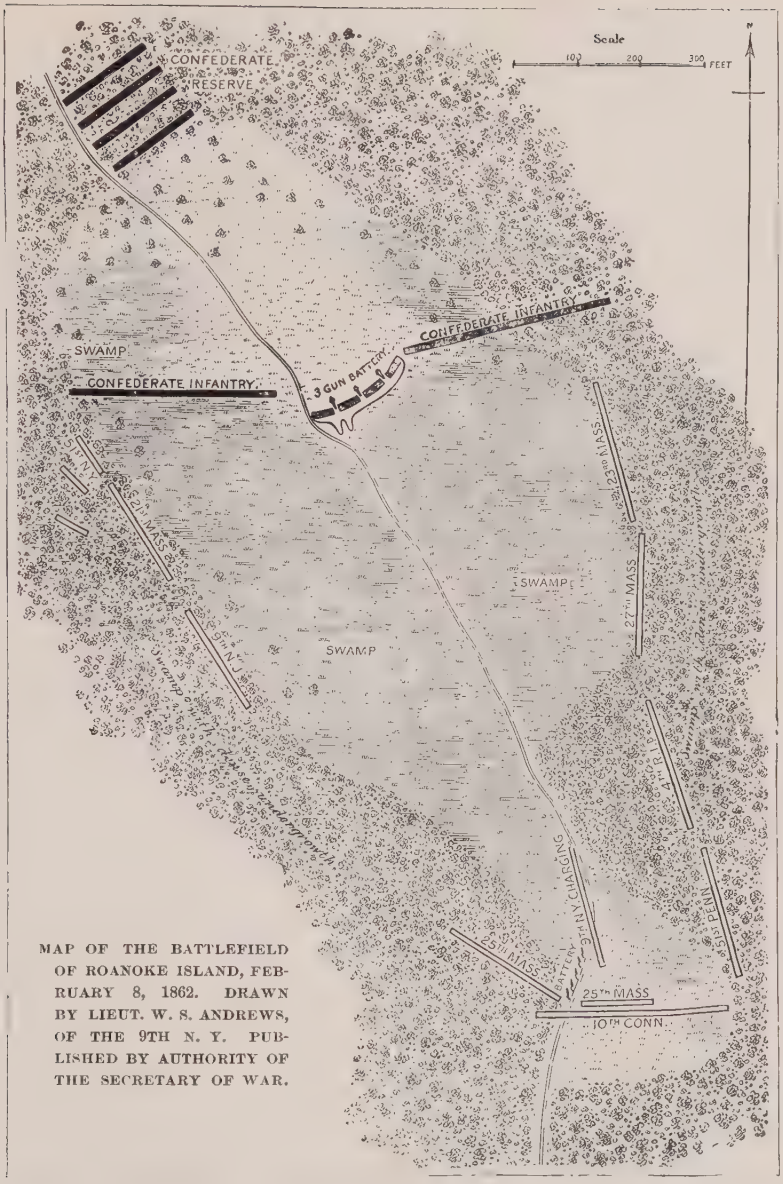
Parke, Report, May 9, 1862. W. R. Vol. IX., pp. 281–284.

It will thus be seen that the success of the parent expedition, led by Burnside against Roanoke Island, quickly resulted in a secondary group of local victories which gave the Union forces command of the entire interior coasts of North Carolina. Of the several designs mentioned in McClellan's original instructions as the objects of the Burnside expedition, all were accomplished save the single one of an advance from New Berne to Goldsboro' to seize one of the important Southern railroads. This had necessarily to await the preliminary work to which the army and navy next devoted them-

CHAP. XIV. selves, and required also an increase of force to hold the captured places and guard communications. Before the needful reënforcements were accumulated the Goldsboro' expedition was unfortunately rendered impossible by an unexpected change in the tide of Union victories. Failure and disaster fell upon McClellan's army in Virginia to such a degree that Burnside, with all the troops he could bring with him, was recalled, early in July, from North Carolina to the James River. Nevertheless, the points already gained in Albemarle and Pamlico sounds were generally held, and through the remainder of the war their occupation contributed essentially, in various ways, to the further advance of the Union arms.

Simultaneously with the successes in North Carolina, other important victories attended the military and naval operations along the Atlantic coast. The hold which had been gained at Port Royal, South Carolina, and the adjacent sea-islands was greatly extended and strengthened, notably in the siege and capture of Fort Pulaski, at the mouth of the Savannah River. Pulaski, like Macon, was one of the old Government forts built for coast protection, which during the secession period were first seized and occupied by State troops, and afterwards turned over to the control and use of the Confederate authorities. Fort Pulaski stood in a strong position on Cockspur Island, Georgia, commanding both channels of the Savannah River. It was a brick work with walls seven and a half feet thick and twenty-five feet high, with one tier of guns in casemate and one *en barbette*. The island it stood on was wholly a marsh, one mile

April 11, 1862.



MAP OF THE BATTLEFIELD OF ROANOKE ISLAND, FEBRUARY 8, 1862. DRAWN BY LIEUT. W. S. ANDREWS, OF THE 9TH N. Y. PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

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long and half a mile wide. The neighboring islands were also mere marshes. The possibility of reducing the fort began to be studied soon after Port Royal was captured, and the work formally commenced about the beginning of February. The ground to operate upon was described as "a soft unctuous mud, free of grit or sand, and incapable of supporting a heavy weight. Even in the most elevated places the partially dry crust is but three or four inches in depth, the substratum being a semi-fluid mud, which is agitated like jelly by the falling of even small bodies upon it, like the jumping of men or ramming of earth. A pole or an oar can be forced into it with ease to the depth of twelve or fifteen feet. In most places the resistance diminishes with increase of penetration. Men walking over it are partially sustained by the roots of reeds and grass, and sink in only five or six inches. When this top support gives way they go down from two to two and a half feet, and in some places much farther." The problem was to transport the heavy material and guns about a mile, and establish batteries in such a locality, working without noise in the darkness of night. It was necessary first to construct a causeway, resting on fascines and brushwood in positions within range of the effective fire of the fort. "No one," says the report, "except an eye-witness, can form any but a faint conception of the herculean labor by which mortars of eight and a half tons weight and columbiads but a trifle lighter were moved in the dead of night over a narrow causeway bordered by swamps on either side, and liable at any moment to be overturned and buried in the mud beyond reach. . .

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Gillmore, Report, Oct. 20, 1865. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 151.

CHAP. XIV. Two hundred and fifty men were barely sufficient to move a single piece on sling carts. The men were not allowed to speak above a whisper, and were guided by the notes of a whistle." Yet the task was pursued with such industry that on the 9th of April eleven batteries, comprising thirty-six guns, were ready to open fire at distances varying from 1650 to 3400 yards, and the fort was summoned to surrender at sunrise on the morning of
1862. April 10. A refusal having been received, the bombardment was begun, the fort making a vigorous reply. The surprising and hitherto unknown effectiveness of rifled guns and modern projectiles was quickly proved. By two o'clock of the second day's bombardment the fort was so far damaged by a large breach and the dismounting of eleven of its guns as to compel its surrender, which took place that afternoon, April 11, 1862. The armament of the fort was forty-eight guns; its garrison of 385 men were made prisoners. General Quincy A. Gillmore conducted the siege operations, General David Hunter being at that time in command of the Department of the South.

Gillmore, Report, Oct. 20, 1865. W. R. Vol. VI., pp. 149, 155–159.

It will be remembered that when Port Royal was captured in the previous autumn, it was the intention and expectation of the Government that the forces engaged in that enterprise should proceed at once in an attempt to repossess and occupy the whole Florida coast. For reasons heretofore mentioned, that project could not then be immediately carried out. The design, however, was not abandoned, and with the opening of the year 1862 preparations were made to renew the undertaking. Accordingly, an expedition sailed from

Port Royal during the month of March, consisting of nineteen ships-of-war, under Flag-officer Samuel F. Du Pont, and a few transports, carrying a brigade of volunteers, under General H. G. Wright, which, within a few days, and without serious resistance, occupied, and thereafter securely held, the whole remaining Atlantic coast southward, including Brunswick, Fort Clinch, Fernandina, Cumberland Island and Sound, Amelia Sound, Jacksonville, and St. Augustine. Nor did the triumphs of the navy end here. While this reduction and repossession of the Atlantic coast was going on, another movement, more formidable in its preparation and more brilliant in its successes, was in progress.

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CHAPTER XV

FARRAGUT'S VICTORY

CHAP XV. EVENTS bring us to the relation of the capture of New Orleans, the commercial metropolis of the South, by a fleet under command of Flag-officer David G. Farragut. The expedition took shape very gradually; first, through information derived from the blockade; second, through the practical experience gained at the bombardment of the Hatteras forts in August, and those at Port Royal in October, of the year 1861. In these engagements the United States vessels of war demonstrated such a relative strength against shore batteries as to inspire confidence in yet more hazardous attempts of the same character. It was there proved that even wooden ships might be relied on to pass ordinary fortifications under fire with many chances of success; and upon this main idea the expedition against New Orleans was organized. When we remember with what limited means the Government began the gigantic task of establishing and maintaining the blockade, and of reducing the rebel defenses of the Atlantic harbors, it is matter of wonder that the additional ships and their armaments essential to the achievement of complete success in a new undertaking of such magnitude could have been collected within less than a year after the outbreak of the war.

The first indirect steps grew out of the necessities of the Gulf blockade. Ship Island, lying in the Gulf, off the coast of the State of Mississippi, midway between New Orleans and Mobile, was many years since selected as a point on which to erect a Federal fort, which at the beginning of the rebellion had risen but little above its foundations. The island was taken possession of by the rebels, but found to be useless, with their limited resources, and abandoned. Thereupon the Union forces occupied it in September, and it soon became, because of its central position, the principal naval station in the Gulf. Several naval and military enterprises in that quarter were being suggested and studied during the autumn of 1861. Before it was determined whether the attack should be directed against the Texas coast, or New Orleans, or Mobile Bay, a preliminary force of 2500 troops, under command of General Benjamin F. Butler, was organized to be sent to Ship Island, with a view of taking part in an expedition against such of these points as might be selected. New Orleans being the most important prize, both military and political, naturally became the principal objective as information about the feasibility of its capture was collected. The turning-point in its selection seems to have been the arrival at Washington early in November of Commander David D. Porter from several months' blockading duty off the mouths of the Mississippi, bringing the latest information gleaned from spies and contrabands concerning the river and city defenses. The designs of the Navy Department were confidentially laid before him, and his professional opinion of the enterprise was asked.

Welles, in "Galaxy," Nov., 1871, p. 677.

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New Orleans lies on the Mississippi River, about one hundred miles above its mouths; and the chief obstacles the fleet would have to encounter in its ascent were Forts St. Philip and Jackson, situated nearly opposite each other at a bend of the river, seventy-five miles below the city. They were formidable forts of masonry, of scientific construction, originally built by the Government; and, like so many others, had been seized by the State authorities in the early movements of secession, and turned over to the use of the Confederates. Together they had an armament of over 100 guns, and garrisons of 600 or 700 men each. Fort Jackson lay on the right bank of the stream; St. Philip on the left bank half a mile above it. "The original proposition of the Navy Department," says ex-Secretary Welles, "was to run past the forts and capture the city, when, the fleet being above and communication cut off, the lower defenses must fall." Commander Porter concurred in the desirability and probable success of the naval expedition which the department suggested and outlined, but strongly advised the addition of a powerful mortar flotilla, which should reduce these formidable forts by a bombardment before the fleet essayed to pass them, so as to leave no enemy or serious obstruction in the rear; and his proposal was adopted.

Welles, in "Galaxy," Nov., 1871, p. 678.

1861.

The formal beginning of the enterprise dates from the 15th of November. On the evening of that day there met at the residence of General McClellan a council composed of President Lincoln, Mr. Welles, Secretary of the Navy, Assistant-Secretary Fox, Commander Porter, and McClellan

himself, whom the President had recently made general-in-chief of all the armies. Here the proposed expedition against New Orleans was for the first time mentioned to the general; with the other members of the council it was already a familiar topic. Hitherto, the army plans against New Orleans contemplated reaching it with a column descending the Mississippi from Cairo, and, premising that it would require an army of 50,000 to attack it from the Gulf, McClellan objected that he could not detach that number of troops from other undertakings. Mr. Welles replied that he expected the navy to capture the city, and that he only asked a contingent of 10,000 to hold it; one-fourth of this number was already destined for Ship Island. McClellan promised the required forces; the project was once more fully discussed and definitely ordered by the President; and three days thereafter Porter was instructed to proceed to New York and organize his mortar flotilla, which he was to command in person. CHAP. XV.

Welles to Porter, Nov. 18, 1861. "Galaxy," Nov., 1871, p. 682.

The enterprise once agreed upon, there came the momentous and perplexing question, who should command and lead an expedition of this magnitude and importance? By happy fortune the choice of the department fell upon Captain David G. Farragut, sixty years of age, forty-eight years of which had been spent in naval service, he having become a midshipman when he was eleven years old. He was made lieutenant at twenty-four, commander at forty, and captain at fifty-four. But in all this time his talents, experience, and service had largely outrun his opportunities for distinction. Fame approached her favorite with unusual tardiness,

CHAP. XV. even after the beginning of civil war. Though born in Tennessee, and twice allied by marriage with Virginia families, his heart was untouched by disloyalty. He was residing at Norfolk, Virginia, when the frenzy of secession seized the Old Dominion. "On the morning," writes his son, "when it was announced that Virginia had passed the ordinance
1861. of secession (April 18th), Farragut went as usual to the rendezvous previously mentioned, and was soon aware by the reserved manner and long faces of those about him that affairs had reached a climax. He expressed himself freely as not satisfied with the action of the Convention, and believing that President Lincoln was fully justified in calling for troops after the seizure of the forts and arsenals. He was impatiently informed that a person of his sentiments 'could not live in Norfolk,' to which he calmly replied, 'Well, then, I can live somewhere else.' Returning home immediately, with the feeling that the time for prompt action had arrived, he announced to his wife his intention of 'sticking to the flag,' and said to her, 'This act of mine may cause years of separation from your family; so you must decide quickly whether you will go North or remain here.' It is needless to say that her decision was as prompt as his own, to go with her husband."

Loyall Farragut, "Life of Admiral D. G. Farragut," p. 204.

He left the city by the evening steamer with his family, arriving in Baltimore the next day just after the mob had assaulted the Sixth Massachusetts. Railroad connection with the North was already broken, but he was lucky enough to secure passage to Philadelphia on a canal-boat, whence he proceeded to New York and domiciled his family in a

MAPS OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI.

quiet village on the Hudson. The Government placed him at very necessary and useful but not prominent service; and for nine months, during all the first heat and tumult of the rebellion, he remained comparatively unnoticed. But he lost nothing by biding his time; the department had not overlooked him, and it now entrusted him with a task, the successful performance of which within three months brought him immediate and world-wide renown. About a month after Porter went to New York to prepare his mortar flotilla, Captain Farragut was called to Washington and confidentially informed of the duty he was expected to undertake. In return, Mr. Welles says, "he gave his unqualified approval of the original plan, adopted it with enthusiasm, said it was the true way to get to New Orleans, and offered to run by the forts with even a less number of vessels than we were preparing for him, provided that number could not be supplied. . . While he would not have advised the mortar flotilla, it might be of greater benefit than he anticipated, might be more efficient than he expected, and he willingly adopted it as a part of his command, though he apprehended it would be likely to warn the enemy of our intentions. He expected, however, to pass the forts and restore New Orleans to the Government, or never return. He might not come back, he said, but the city would be ours." Something of this spirit and confidence appear in the brief note to his family, under date of December 21, 1861, announcing his great opportunity: "Keep your lips closed and burn my letters; for perfect silence is to be observed—the first injunction of the Secretary. I am to have

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Welles, in "Galaxy," Nov., 1871, p. 683.

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Farragut, "Life of Admiral D. G. Farragut," p. 208. Welles to Farragut, Jan. 20, 1862. Report of the Secretary of the Navy.

a flag in the Gulf, and the rest depends upon myself. Keep calm and silent; I shall sail in three weeks."

On the ninth of January Farragut was appointed to the command of the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron; on the twentieth he received his confidential instructions to attempt the capture of the city of New Orleans. He sailed from Hampton Roads on the third of February in the steam sloop *Hartford*, a screw ship of the second class, 1900 tons burthen, capable, under combined sail and steam power, of a speed of eleven knots, and carrying a battery of twenty-five guns — a swift, strong ship of beautiful proportions and with perfect appointments, realizing the sailor's highest ideal of grace in outline, celerity in motion, and efficiency in combat. Farragut made the *Hartford* his flagship; and at a time when the traditional glories of wooden ships began to vanish before the encroachments of iron armor, the admiration and confidence he bestowed on his vessel lends a tinge of romance to the achievements by which he carried her fame into history. The reader may be spared the period of vexatious delay and anxious preparation; it is enough to say Farragut acted on his maxim, "the rest depends upon myself." With his half-century's sea experience, his critical inspection neglected no detail of hull, spar, or rigging, omitted no essential instruction to each commander and crew of his fleet. If space permitted it would be a pleasure to record the qualities of his vessels, and, high above these, the skill and devotion of the commanders who sailed under him. They caught his zeal; they shared his courage. One impulse of confidence, one resolution of success, possessed them all. There

have probably been few instances where the will and the power of the fleet were so thoroughly centered in the flag.

By the middle of April the expedition was before the forts below New Orleans, Farragut with seventeen men-of-war and 177 guns; Porter with a mortar flotilla of nineteen schooners and six armed steamships for guard and towing service; General Butler with the army contingent of six thousand men, the remainder being yet detained at Ship Island for want of transports. The rebel defenses were of threefold character. First, Forts Jackson and St. Philip with about 115 guns, fourteen of them in casemate; second, a river barrier, one and one-half miles below the forts, consisting of log-rafts and dismasted schooners, anchored at intervals and connected by strong chains; third, an improvised fleet of sixteen rebel gunboats, several of them armed with iron prows, and one of them (the *Manassas*) an iron-plated ram. Still another vessel of formidable construction, also designed for iron plating, but in default of which her sloping sides were covered with railroad iron, remained unfinished; she was brought down and anchored half a mile above Fort St. Philip, thus adding a stationary battery of sixteen guns to the strength of the upper fort. Of the various land defenses nearer the city, and breastworks and rifle-pits to guard against inland approaches and through bayous, it is needless to make mention; the course and consequences of the attack rendered them of no avail. One additional and by no means insignificant device of protection had been ingeniously prepared by the enemy. Long flat-boats

Butler to Stanton, April 13, 1862. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 708.

Farragut, "Life of Admiral D. G. Farragut," p. 216.

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were filled with the resinous and highly inflammable pine knots of the South, and thus converted into fire-rafts to be set ablaze and adrift at the opportune moment, to carry terror and destruction into the midst of the ascending fleet.

On the 18th of April Porter's flotilla of nineteen schooners, carrying two mortars each, were anchored from 2500 to 4000 yards below the forts, where they began a terrific bombardment, firing on the first day over 1400 shells. Nearly all the bombs were directed at Fort Jackson, the nearest and largest work; and, notwithstanding a certain want of accuracy, the immense number of missiles created fearful destruction, burning the wooden structures and dismounting barbette guns. That first night, while the fire was raging within and about it, Fort Jackson was well-nigh helpless. But its condition was not known in the Union fleet, and advantage could not be taken of the panic. For five days longer Porter continued his furious bombardment, greatly increasing mere exterior damage; but, as the garrison was kept in the casemates, the effectiveness of the work was not thereby materially reduced. On the third day Porter began to lose confidence in mortars, and on the fifth day Farragut decided to try his ships. Two of the gunboats were sent on the night of the twentieth to cut away the barrier of hulks and rafts stretched across the river, and succeeded in making an opening sufficient to enable vessels to pass through. At two o'clock on the morning of April 24 Farragut gave the signal to advance, Porter at the same time increasing his bombardment to its utmost rapidity. The fleet was organized for the attack in two sec-

Farragut, Report, May 6, 1862, and Porter, Report, April 30, 1862.

tions; the "column of the red" to proceed first and, following the east bank, to engage Fort St. Philip; this division, consisting of eight ships with sixty-seven guns, was commanded by Captain Theodorus Bailey and led by the gunboat *Cayuga*. The "column of the blue" was to follow, keeping to the west bank, and attack the stronger works of Fort Jackson; this division, consisting of nine ships with eighty-seven guns, was commanded by Farragut himself and led by his flag-ship the *Hartford*.[1]

And now there ensued a naval battle which, after the opening movements, it is simply impossible to describe. As the divisions passed through the barrier, the forts opened their cannonade, to which, until near approach, the ships' guns were not in position to make reply. Once abreast the works, the vessels successively slowed their speed to discharge broadsides of grape and canister, quickly clearing the parapets; the rebel gunners, however, pluckily returning to their guns as chance permitted. The fire of St. Philip, upon which Porter had exercised only a single mortar, dismounting but a single gun, was especially hot in these intermissions of defense. It was a quiet April night, illumined only by starlight and the thin crescent

[1] The following vessels composed the divisions.

COLUMN OF THE RED.— *Cayuga*, flag gunboat, Lieut.-Com. Harrison, with Capt. Bailey on board; *Pensacola*, Capt. H. W. Morris; *Mississippi*, Com. M. Smith; *Oneida*, Com. S. P. Lee; *Varuna*, Com. C. S. Boggs; *Katahdin*, Lieut.-Com. G. H. Preble; *Kineo*, Lieut.-Com. Ransom; *Wissahickon*, Lieut.-Com. A. N. Smith.

COLUMN OF THE BLUE.— *Hartford*, Com. Wainwright, with Flag-officer Farragut on board; *Brooklyn*, Capt. T. T. Craven; *Richmond*, Com. J. Alden; *Sciota*, Lieut.-Com. Edward Donaldson; *Iroquois*, Com. John De Camp; *Kennebeck*, Lieut.-Com. John H. Russell; *Pinola*, Lieut.-Com. P. Crosby; *Itasca*, Lieut.-Com. C. H. B. Caldwell; *Winona*, Lieut.-Com. E. T. Nichols.

Report of the Secretary of the Navy, December 1, 1862.

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of the waning moon; but with the opening of battle the scene changed to alternations of fire and smoke, a quick succession of light and darkness — of dazzling blaze and impenetrable gloom. The divisions, starting in orderly line, became separated and mixed. "The fire became general," says Farragut's report, "the smoke dense, and we had nothing to aim at but the flash of their guns; it was very difficult to distinguish friends from foes. . . . It was a kind of guerrilla; they were fighting in all directions."

Farragut, Report, May 6, 1862.

While the *Hartford* and her consorts were yet thundering their broadsides against Fort Jackson, the "Division of the Red," led by the *Cayuga*, had already run the gauntlet of the two forts; but above their line of fire they encountered the Confederate gunboat flotilla. The vessels composing it were not only inferior in strength and armament to the Union gunboats, but were under three different and independent commanders, which diminished their efficiency for defense. It was still dark when the Union gunboats dashed among them, and no coherent narrative of the encounter has been, or perhaps could be, preserved. On the Union side, it was hot pursuit; on the rebel side, quick catastrophe. Bailey, the division commander, sententiously sums up the struggle: "Two large steamers now attempted to board, one on our starboard bow, the other astern, a third on our starboard beam. The eleven-inch Dahlgren being trained on this fellow, we fired at a range of thirty yards. The effect was very destructive; he immediately steered in shore, ran aground, and burnt himself up. The Parrot gun on the forecastle

drove off one on the bow, while we prepared to repel boarders, so close was our remaining enemy. About this time Boggs [of the *Varuna*] and Lee[1] [of the *Oneida*] came dashing in, and made a finish of the rebel boats — eleven in all." But the victory also brought its injuries and losses. The ships were all more or less riddled by the small shot from the forts; and the *Varuna*, having in her eagerness run ahead of her companions, was set upon by two rebel gunboats which rammed her from opposite sides and sunk her.[2]

Bailey, Report, April 25, 1862.

1 "A flash revealed the ram *Manassas*, gliding down our port side below our guns, and passing too close and swiftly, aided by steam and the current, to enable us to bring our heavy guns to bear on her. Next came a gunboat quite near, and, passing from the Fort Jackson to Fort St. Philip side across our bow, ran into it with a full head of steam, and cut it down with a loud crash on its starboard quarter. Clear of our guns in a moment, it drifted down stream in the darkness. We now slowed down and afterwards used the steam as necessary to get or keep position in fighting the gunboats, firing right and left into them as we could ascertain (from other indications than black smoke, on account of the *Varuna*) that we were not firing into one of our steamers, forbore to fire into those steamers that appeared to be river transports, and ceased firing into others when they made no return. In this manner we fired into and passed several rebel boats on the right bank, leaving it for those who came after to pick up the prizes." —Lee, Report, April 26, 1862.

2 "We had passed nearly through the fleet of the enemy's gunboats when we discovered one of them, then engaging the *Oneida*, heading for us, apparently with the intention of running us down. Owing to the small amount of steam we then had (seventeen pounds) he soon began to come up with us, and finally struck us twice — once abreast the mainmast and again abreast the smoke-stack. He did not escape the second time without receiving the contents of the starboard broadside, which, as the captain afterwards told me, swept his decks of nearly every living object. Before striking us he fired his forward gun — a rifled thirty-two pounder — which raked our decks, killing three men and wounding several. Up to this time we had passed the forts and gunboats without having a single man injured, although the ship had been struck several times. The steamer that first struck us, I have since learned, was the *Governor Moore*, iron-clad on the bow, and commanded by Beverly Kennon, formerly a lieutenant in the United States service.

CHAP. XV. The "Division of the Blue," following under Farragut, was not without its dangers and achievements. Three of the rear gunboats failed to pass the forts at all and returned, one of them with machinery disabled, to Porter's flotilla below. One of the large ships, the *Brooklyn*, became seriously entangled with the barrier of hulks and rafts; then she was "feebly butted" by the ram *Manassas;* afterwards, while yet under the fire of Fort Jackson, she was attacked by a large rebel steamer; but Captain T. T. Craven in his report says: "Our port broadside, at the short distance of only fifty or sixty yards, completely finished him, setting him on fire almost instantaneously." Perhaps the most exciting incident of the passage happened to the *Hartford.* The enemy had on several occasions set adrift and sent down fire-rafts; but the efficient fire brigade, with boats, grapnels, and other appliances specially organized to meet them, had hitherto succeeded in towing them out of the way, to points where they would be harmless. It happened as the *Hartford* was passing Fort St. Philip, one of these fire-rafts came down, not merely drifting in the current but pushed and directed by a rebel tug-boat. The *Hartford*, swerving aside to avoid the encounter, ran aground; and the tug, perceiving the advantage, boldly pushed the blazing raft against the flag-

Hardly had we recovered from the shock of these two blows before we were struck on the port quarter by a vessel, the *Stonewall Jackson*, constructed for this purpose. We received so much injury from this blow, and we made so much water, that it was impossible to keep the vessel afloat, and she was run ashore, and every effort made to save the wounded and crew, which I am happy to say was accomplished, with the friendly aid of the boats of the vessels then up with us."—Swasey, Executive Officer, Report, April 29, 1862.

ship. In an instant the flames enveloped the whole ship's side and flashed aloft into the rigging. It was a critical and painful moment to Farragut: "My God!" he exclaimed, "is it to end in this way?" But caution and good discipline triumphed. Only the dry paint was as yet ablaze, and a well-directed stream of water from the fire apparatus subdued the mounting flame. Most opportunely too the ship's engines were able to back her from her great peril, and she continued up the river silencing the guns of Fort St. Philip as she passed.

The Confederates evidently expected much from the ram *Manassas*, of their flotilla, described as a converted tug-boat, covered with half-inch iron plating, carrying a thirty-two-pounder gun in her bow. No accurate description of her movements is reported, and during the fight she mysteriously appeared and disappeared in the darkness among the ships, though her efforts to inflict damage proved ineffectual. As the day dawned she was discovered following the vessels up the river, and Commander Melancton Smith, with the large side-wheel steamer *Mississippi*, turned back and attacked and captured her, though he was unable to take her in tow or spare a crew to man her. "I directed her to be set on fire," reports Commander Smith, "and then so riddled her with shot that she was dislodged from the bank and drifted below the forts, where she blew up and sank." This incident appears to have closed the engagement. The vessels passed up the river and came temporarily to anchor at quarantine station, six miles above the forts. The combat had lasted about one and a half hours; the rebel flotilla, with the exception of three steamers, was destroyed;

Smith, Report, April 26, 1862.

CHAP. XV. Farragut, Report, April 25, 1862.

the Union loss was, the *Varuna*, sunk, considerable miscellaneous damage to other ships, and a total of twenty-four killed and eighty-six wounded. A little more than six weeks from the day when the great naval battle between the *Merrimac* and *Monitor*, in Hampton Roads, filled the world with the new fame of ironclads, Farragut's victory at New Orleans revived the prestige of wooden ships when handled with courage and skill.

The Union fleet made but a short halt at quarantine. Farragut pushed on over the seventy-five miles of distance which lay between him and the main object and prize of his expedition. By ten o'clock of April 25, he was at the Chalmette batteries, three miles below the city. In ten minutes the ships had silenced the works; the fleet moved cautiously round the bend of the river, and New Orleans lay helpless under the Union guns. News of the hostile approach put its population of 150,000 souls into a dangerous ferment from opposing passions of rage and fear. With only three thousand Confederate troops, with but eighteen days' provisions for the people, with the certainty of siege and starvation if he remained, the Confederate general, Mansfield Lovell, resolved to evacuate the place and all its dependencies. To this end he hastily removed such arms and supplies as he could and ordered the destruction of the remaining Confederate war material and property. Cotton, coal, timber, steamboats, and the unfinished ironclad *Mississippi* were burned. "The destruction of property was awful," says Farragut. If the necessities of war palliate such sacrifice, the same excuse cannot justify the order of the Richmond authorities and the

Lovell, Report, May 22, 1862. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 513.

Farragut, Report, May 6, 1862. Randolph to Lovell, April 25, 1862. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 883.

fleeing Governor's proclamation to the planters of that exposed interior, to burn their cotton, in obedience to which an infatuated zeal wrought the destruction of millions of private property, serving no end except to impoverish the community.

At noon of the 25th Farragut sent Captain Bailey, who commanded the "Division of the Red," to confer with the Mayor of New Orleans. It was an imprudent exposure of his most valuable officer; for, as Bailey with a single companion walked from the landing to the City Hall, they were followed by a noisy and insulting street rabble, cheering for Jefferson Davis and uttering wild threats of violence; the resolute and self-possessed bearing of the two officers alone saved them. Bailey demanded of Mayor John T. Monroe that he should surrender the city and raise the Union flag. The Mayor answered, that he had no military authority, and called in General Lovell who, on his part, refused to surrender, but announced that he would evacuate the city, "and then leave the civil authorities to act as they might deem proper." Bailey returned and reported these equivocal answers. On the following day, April 26, Farragut by letter again demanded of the Mayor "the unqualified surrender of the city," the lowering of all hostile flags, "and that the emblem of sovereignty of the United States be hoisted over the City Hall, Mint, and Custom-House by meridian this day." To this the Mayor replied on the same afternoon with a long letter of mixed grandiloquence and contumacy, that "General Lovell has evacuated it [the city] with his troops and restored back to me the administration of its government"; that "the city is without means of

Farragut to Monroe, April 26, 1862.

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defense"; that "to surrender such a place were an idle and unmeaning ceremony"; and that the people of New Orleans "yield simply that obedience which the conqueror is enabled to extort from the conquered." This last statement the Mayor prefaced by the declaration, "The obligations which I shall assume in their name shall be religiously complied with."

Monroe to Farragut, April 26, 1862.

Though connected with other phrases intended to tickle the ears of the rebel populace with a sound of refusal, this language was in fact a formal and technical surrender of the city. Accordingly on the morning of Sunday, April 27, Farragut ordered Captain Henry W. Morris of the *Pensacola*, anchored near the Mint, to hoist the Union flag over that building, which was done. Instead of leaving a file of marines to guard it, Captain Morris thought to protect the flag by loading a howitzer in the main-top of his ship with grape, pointing it at the flag-staff, with orders to the lookout to fire upon any one who might approach to molest it. It being Sunday, the ship's crew were assembled for prayers at eleven o'clock, and while the service was going on, the lookout saw four men suddenly appear at the flag-staff, cut the halyards, and rush away with their booty. He fired the howitzer, but without effect; the desperadoes descended from the building and joined the rabble below, where the flag was dragged through the streets, publicly insulted, and torn into shreds. Law and honor required the Mayor promptly to punish these offenders, in order to redeem his "religious" pledge for the city, of the day before, to yield obedience to the captor. The Mayor did nothing of the kind. On the contrary

the leading newspaper published the names of the perpetrators with commendations, while the populace gloated over the act of defiance. Punishment nevertheless came. William B. Mumford, the ringleader, who cut loose the flag, was afterwards, under General Butler's command of the city, tried, and hung from a window of the same building for his grave military crime. Meanwhile further dilatory correspondence came from the Mayor and Common Council, and on April 28 Farragut sent a qualified threat that he would bombard the city, and an order to remove the women and children. The Mayor returned another whining and contumacious reply, sheltering his evasion and non-compliance under tricky phrases and appeals, apparently more designed to provoke than to avert bombardment and slaughter. His language assumed privileges of hostility, while claiming immunity as prisoners. The Mayor's purpose, in this persistent quibbling over the word "surrender," becomes intelligible when we read Jefferson Davis's dispatch to him of April 28: "Your answer to Commander Farragut leaves to you all the chances and rights of war. . . Maintain firmly the position you took in your reply, and let us hope for a successful issue." Farragut, however, kept his temper; on the 29th he sent a strong guard of marines with howitzers formally to take down the rebel flags from the public buildings and raise those of the United States in their stead, with a new warning to the Mayor; since which day they have floated inviolate.

Davis to Monroe, April 28, 1862. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 884.

Our narrative must return to Forts Jackson and St. Philip. Though the Union fleet was both below and above them, they still remained in possession

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of the rebels, who, as well as they might, repaired the damage from the bombardment. After Farragut had passed the forts, Porter sent a demand for their surrender, but the Confederate commander refused. Porter's situation was not free from peril; the rebel ironclad *Louisiana* still lay anchored above the forts, and her exact offensive strength, or rather, as it turned out, her weakness was not known. Had she been as effective as was supposed, she might have wrought great havoc among the mortar flotilla. Porter therefore ceased his fire and stationed his vessels for defensive action.

Farragut's plan, announced in his general order of April 20, was that "the forts should be run; and when a force is once above the forts to protect the troops, they should be landed at quarantine from the Gulf side by bringing them through the bayou, and then our forces should move up the river, mutually aiding each other as it can be done to advantage." The attack thus consisted of three combined movements. First, Porter's bombardment; second, Farragut's dash past the forts; third, the landing of Butler's troops. This third feature was now put in execution. Before proceeding up the river, Farragut sent back word that he would leave two gunboats at quarantine to protect the landing.

Farragut, General Order, April 20, 1862.

It is estimated that the annual floods of the Mississippi River bring down to the Mexican Gulf an amount of sand and mud equal, for an average year, to a mass one square mile in area and 268 feet deep.[1] By these annual deposits the river has

[1] "The amount of silt carried to the Mexican Gulf by the Mississippi, according to the Delta Survey under Humphreys and Abbot, is about 1-1500th the weight of the water, or 1-2900th

built for itself narrow banks, dikes, or levees, extending thirty or forty miles into the ocean, so that the waters and marshes of the Gulf, on both sides, approach very near this inclosed river-bed. Farragut's fleet was no sooner well past the forts on the morning of the 24th than Butler proceeded with his transports down the river, out through Pass à l'Outre, the easternmost mouth of the Mississippi, and around eastwardly to Sable Island, twelve miles in rear of Fort St. Philip. Here he trans-shipped three regiments to the gunboat *Miami*, of lighter draft, in which he was able to proceed to within six miles of the fort. He had also brought with him thirty small boats, into which he again transferred the Twenty-sixth Massachusetts and portions of the Fourth Wisconsin and Twenty-first Indiana, who rowed their boats four and a half miles farther. "At the entrance of Manuel's Canal," says Butler's report, "a mile and a half from the point of landing, rowing became impossible, as well from the narrowness of the canal as the strength of the current, which ran like a mill-race. Through this the boats could only be impelled by dragging them singly, with the men up to their waists in water." It required persevering effort and considerable time to make this long circuit. They had started on the 24th; on the 26th they were at Sable

Butler, Report, April 29, 1862. W. R Vol. VI., p. 504.

its bulk; equivalent for an average year to 812,500,000,000,000 pounds, or a mass one square mile in area and 241 feet deep. . .

"Besides the material held in suspension, as these authors observe, the Mississippi pushes along into the Gulf large quantities of earthy matter; and from observations made by them, they estimate the annual amount thus contributed to the Gulf to be about 750,000,000 cubic feet — which would cover a square mile 27 feet deep; and this, added to the 241 feet above, makes the total 268 feet."— Dana, "Manual of Geology," pp. 648, 649.

CHAP. XV. Gerdes to Bache, April 27, 1862.

Island and, during the night of the 27th, 400 men were sent up to quarantine, where the gunboats *Wissahickon* and *Kineo* awaited them. Meanwhile, by a similar circuit, Porter had sent six schooners of his mortar fleet down out of the Southwest pass and round westwardly, through the Gulf and bayous, to the rear of Fort Jackson. As soon as Butler could land more troops he threw a detachment across the river, thus holding both banks against retreat, supply, or reënforcement.

Porter, Report, April 30, 1862.

The rebel garrisons of Forts Jackson and St. Philip, though having a complete respite from attack since the passage of the fleet, and though they had to a considerable extent repaired their damage, could entertain from the first little hope of succor or escape. The Union officers at quarantine, immediately after the action, permitted the seriously wounded of both forts to be placed on board the Confederate steamer *McRea* and sent to New Orleans under flag of truce. By this means the garrisons received news of the capture of New Orleans, the retirement of General Lovell's army, and the burning of the ironclad *Mississippi*. While they noted these diminishing chances, they could also see Butler's gunboats, transports, and launches working their way up the bay and bayous above them, and finally landing troops at quarantine. On the 26th Porter again summoned the forts to capitulate, offering liberal terms and pointing out, that though they might hold out a little longer, their surrender was necessarily a mere question of time. Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Higgins, commanding, replied that he had as yet no official information of the surrender of New Orleans and

D. G. Farragut

could not until then entertain the proposition. But while the rebel commanders were hesitating, the men composing the garrisons were forming their own conclusions and preparing to act on them. At midnight of April 27 there was a sudden mutiny in Fort Jackson; the insurgents seized the guards, reversed the field-pieces commanding the gates, began spiking the guns, and fired upon officers who went to the parapet to control them. Simultaneously, about half the garrison deserted the fort with their arms and surrendered themselves to Butler's pickets.

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Duncan, Report, April 30, 1862. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 531.

This state of affairs left the commanders no alternative. On the forenoon of April 28 they sent a flag of truce to Porter, accepting his terms of capitulation, which were duly signed at an interview between the officers on the steamer *Harriet Lane* that afternoon. While the officers sat together in the cabin an exciting incident took place. The Confederate note of acceptance stated that "We have no control over the vessels afloat"; but it was taken for granted that the flags of truce flying from the Union ships and visible to all were a sufficient safeguard. Great was the consternation, therefore, when it was suddenly announced that the Confederate ironclad *Louisiana*, hitherto anchored above Fort St. Philip, had been set on fire by her commander, abandoned and cut adrift, and was floating down towards the other ships. Porter writes that he said to the Confederate officers: "This is sharp practice, but if you can stand the explosion when it comes, we can. We will go on and finish the capitulation." The Confederate officers protested their innocence of the act,

Higgins to Porter, April 28, 1862. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 544.

"Century Magazine," April, 1885, p. 950.

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and quietly remained. "As the wreck in descending kept close into the Fort St. Philip shore," reports Confederate General J. K. Duncan, "the chances were taken by the enemy without changing the position of his boats." Fortunately the *Louisiana* exploded while abreast Fort St. Philip, and before she had come near enough to cause damage to Porter's ships.

Duncan, Report, April 30, 1861. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 532.

CHAPTER XVI

NEW ORLEANS

THE way was now clear to New Orleans; and as soon as General Butler could get his transports from the Gulf side round into the river again, he proceeded, after occupying the forts, as rapidly as possible up the river with his troops. On the 1st of May the naval forces under Farragut turned over to him the formal possession of the city, and he continued in command of the Department of the Gulf until the following December. The withdrawal of General Lovell, and the abandonment of Forts Pike and McComb at the entrances to Lake Pontchartrain, left him with no serious campaign immediately on his hands; but the task of governing the city of New Orleans was one which put all his energy and shrewdness into requisition. The supply of provisions had been interrupted by the military operations of the rebels themselves before the coming of Farragut's fleet; a portion of these again were carried away with Lovell's retiring army. When Butler came, starvation was close upon 150,000 people of New Orleans.[1]

[1] "My efforts to accumulate provisions enough in the city to feed the population had proved abortive, and an examination made a few days previous to the evacuation had satisfied me that there were not in the city provisions enough to sustain the population for more than eighteen days."— Major-General Lovell, Testimony before a Court of Inquiry. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 566.

CHAP. XVI. To avert this danger was the general's first urgent effort, and he made it successful over all difficulties. His second care was to quell and to control the dangerous disloyalty of the population. An order to his own soldiers forbade, under the severest penalties, the stealing of public or private property; a proclamation to the citizens established martial law and made minute regulations for the preservation of order. He gave to neutral aliens and to loyalists assurance of full protection to persons and property; and to non-combatant Confederates also, so far as the exigencies of the public service would permit. In their most favorable phases, war and martial law are full of necessary sacrifice and harshness, and it may be said that General Butler's military government, firm and vigilant throughout, was tolerant and even liberal to the well-disposed and orderly, but severe against transgressors and the malicious plottings of certain individuals, corporations, and classes in aid of rebellion.

These pages do not afford room for an extended review of General Butler's administration. In all the war no man was so severely criticized by his enemies or more warmly defended by his friends. Confederate newspapers, orators, and writers have exhausted the vocabulary of abuse for epithets to heap upon his name, from "Yankee" to "Beast" and "Butcher." Secession sympathizers in England approvingly echoed this defamation; Palmerston in the House of Commons went out of his way to swell the unthinking British clamor by repeating the unjust censure. The whole subject might profitably be buried as part of the "animosities and passions of

the war," were it not that Jefferson Davis sought to turn the circumstance to the advantage of the rebellion by a sensational official proclamation declaring Butler "an outlaw and common enemy of mankind, . . . to be immediately executed by hanging" in case of capture, also adding that "all commissioned officers in the command of said Benjamin F. Butler be declared not entitled to be considered as soldiers engaged in honorable warfare, but as robbers and criminals deserving death; and that they and each of them be, wherever captured, reserved for execution." CHAP. XVI.

Davis, Proclamation, Dec. 23, 1862. W. R. Vol. XV., pp. 906, 907.

Since the rebel chief thus prominently inscribed Butler and his officers on the historical record, the recitals of his proclamation deserve a passing notice. In the list of reasons assigned to support his declaration of outlawry the allegations of imprisonment or expulsion from the city may be at once dismissed as the ordinary incidents of war, which the Confederates themselves were daily practising in different parts of the country. So also of the complaint of military fines and assessments; manifestly they are a harsh and arbitrary mode of reprisal for treason and hostility, but international law recognizes them and all civilized nations practise them. The charge that Butler armed African slaves for a servile war first disappears technically under Butler's showing that he armed no slaves, but only free citizens of color, many of whom the rebels themselves had enlisted and drilled before his coming; while the whole charge disappears generally under President Lincoln's proclamation and policy of emancipation, begun before Davis's edict of outlawry was issued.

CHAP. XVI. There remain therefore but two further points to be examined, the execution of Mumford and the so-called "woman order."

Mumford, it will be remembered, tore down the United States flag, which by Farragut's order was raised over the Mint on the morning of April 27. He remained in the city, openly boasted of his crime, and courted applause for his recklessness. When Butler came, he had him arrested and tried by a military commission which, on June 5, convicted him "of treason and an overt act thereof"; and Butler ordered the sentence to be executed on June 7, on which day Mumford was hanged. Jefferson Davis's proclamation calls this "deliberate murder," "when said Mumford was an unresisting and non-combatant captive, and for no offense even alleged to have been committed by him subsequent to the date of the capture of the said city." Such a recital is the merest quibbling. The rebel President well knew that the flag torn down by Mumford had been raised by Farragut, after the demand of unqualified surrender on April 26; after the reply by the Mayor on the same day, that the city was evacuated by Confederate troops, its administration restored back to him, that it was without means of defense, and promising a "religious compliance" of the people to yield obedience to the conqueror. Mumford's crime was against the sovereignty of the United States, duly claimed and enforced by the commissioned officer and the naval power of the Government, to which the municipal authority had formally submitted. The offender thus violated not only military law but also the sanctity of the Mayor's promise. To declare that

Butler to Stanton, June 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. XV., p. 465.

Davis, Proclamation, Dec. 23, 1862. W. R. Vol. XV., p. 906.

Mumford was executed for pulling down the flag at New Orleans before its occupation by the United States forces is willfully to ignore history, law, and evidence. There is no flaw in the chain of legal and technical justice. But if on merely humane considerations we question the severity of the punishment, Jefferson Davis's extravagant fulmination is rebuked by the acts of his own Government and his distinct approval of them. Six months before the hanging of Mumford, the rebel Secretary of War instructed his officer at Knoxville in regard to the "traitors" in East Tennessee: "All such as can be identified as having been engaged in bridge-burning are to be tried summarily by drumhead court martial, and if found guilty executed on the spot by hanging. It would be well to leave their bodies hanging in the vicinity of the burned bridges."

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Benjamin to Wood, Nov. 25, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 701. See also Benjamin to Carroll, Dec. 10, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 754, and Benjamin to Crittenden, Dec. 13, 1861. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 764.

The consideration of the "woman order" requires a preliminary word. Nobody at the North could properly find fault with the women of the South for reflecting the political bias of Southern communities, or because the natural instincts of their sex led them to sympathize with, and warmly espouse, the secession and rebellion in which their fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons embarked. It was to be expected that their prayers would go with them to the battlefield, and their labors, charities, and sacrifices forward them cheer and comfort to camp and hospital. But the records and traditions of the war make it painfully evident that in every rebel State the expression of hatred for "Yankees" was intentionally practised and cultivated among portions of the female popu-

CHAP. XVI. lation of towns and cities; and in this members of the upper classes were frequently the most conspicuous transgressors. Not content with merely entertaining feelings hostile to Union officers and soldiers, they indulged in obtrusive manifestations of them, relying on the respect and privilege accorded their sex for immunity from retort or retaliation. They turned their backs to avoid looking at them. They stepped from sidewalks into the streets to avoid meeting them. They held aside their skirts to indicate a dread of contamination. They turned up their noses as if they smelt foul odors. They feigned nausea as if their presence were insupportable. They retired from street cars or church pews when they entered. They flaunted miniature secession flags and sang secession songs in their presence or thumped secession melodies when they passed their open windows. They uttered uncomplimentary remarks in their hearing, and in some extreme cases deliberately spat on the Federal uniform. Behavior of this nature was not isolated and local, but prevailed widely throughout the South in multiplied forms during the war. Probably only a minority of the women of the South indulged in these antics; but it was a minority so considerable and so diffused that such exhibitions uniformly attended the presence and progress of Federal armies in rebel communities.

As a rule such behavior was only a rankling annoyance which soldiers and officers endured in silence. But in New Orleans, where a mere handful of troops had to govern a great population and prevent violence, it became a serious danger to discipline and authority. Such open and hourly

disrespect was a constant incitement to disorder and mobs. "We were 2500 men," wrote Butler, "in a city seven miles long by two to four wide, of 150,000 inhabitants, all hostile, bitter, defiant, explosive; standing literally on a magazine, a spark only needed for destruction." But how abate the evil? The ordinary punishments of arrest, fine, and imprisonment were inapplicable. The offenses were too vague, the cases too numerous; he could not bring even a fraction of these female malignants into a police court. The only remedy was to stamp their public rudeness with the seal of public disgrace. In his own language: "No order could be made save one which would execute itself." He remembered an old ordinance of the City of London, which he had read in some law-book, and copying its phraseology he, on May 15, published his "Order No. 28," which announced that "As the officers and soldiers of the United States have been subject to repeated insults from the women (calling themselves ladies) of New Orleans in return for the most scrupulous non-interference and courtesy on our part, it is ordered that hereafter when any female shall, by word, gesture, or movement, insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation."

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Parton, "General Butler in New Orleans," p. 342.

1862.

Butler, Order, W. R. Vol. XV., p. 426.

General Butler's simple and plain intention was to abate a nuisance in public demeanor which could be reached in no other way, and he so explained it to the Mayor on the following day. "There can be, there has been," he wrote, "no room for the misunderstanding of General Order

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Butler to Monroe, May 16, 1862. Parton, "General Butler in New Orleans," p. 333.

No. 28. No lady will take any notice of a strange gentleman, and *a fortiori* of a stranger, in such form as to attract attention. . . If obeyed, it will protect the true and modest woman from all possible insult." We have the published testimony of a member of General Butler's staff as to the result. "Can I say anything stronger," he wrote, "in vindication of the propriety of this order, or of the general's sagacity in issuing it, than that the first twenty-four hours after its promulgation witnessed a complete, and it seemed to us who were there almost miraculous, change in the deportment of the ladies of the Crescent City? If success is the test of merit, then was it one of the most meritorious acts of the war."

"Atlantic Monthly," July, 1863, p. 106.

One tremendous outcry, however, of denunciation and misconstruction of its language and intent arose from every rebel in the South and every rebel sympathizer in Europe. British blockade-runners were just beginning to reap their enormous profits from contraband trade with the rebellion; and Lord Palmerston, prime minister of England, grew eloquent, and the London "Times" and "Punch" indignant, over the "infamous" doings of the Yankee Haynau and Nana Sahib. General Butler's nature is combative, and he had a ready retort to such high criticism, which, in due time, he embodied in his farewell address.[1] With a single additional

Parliamentary Debates, June 13, 1862.

[1] "To be sure I might have regaled you with the amenities of British civilization, and yet been within the supposed rules of civilized warfare. You might have been smoked to death in caverns, as were the Covenanters of Scotland by the command of a general of the royal house of England; or roasted, like the inhabitants of Algiers during the French campaign; your wives and daughters might have been given over to the ravisher, as were the unfortunate dames of Spain in the Peninsular war; or you might have been

comment the "woman order" may be dismissed from consideration. In his proclamation of outlawry against Butler, Jefferson Davis says of it: "The soldiers of the United States have been invited and encouraged by general orders to insult and outrage the wives, the mothers, and the sisters of our citizens." Unconsciously, the rebel President's language proved more than he intended. Like the testimony of many another prejudiced witness, his accusation answered itself. He wrote this assertion more than six full months after Butler's order was issued, and during the whole of which period it had remained in force. In the same proclamation Davis recited, in as pathetic and harrowing language as he could command, the wrongs and sufferings which he alleged Butler's administration had heaped upon the people of New Orleans — fine, imprisonment, exile, chains, labor, confiscation, starvation, murder — but not one single instance of insult, much less outrage, under the "woman order," is mentioned in the long sensational catalogue. The simple truth is, Order No. 28 sprang from no evil design of the commander, and was neither misunderstood by, nor provoked the least evil act from, his officers or soldiers. But for the prominence given it by Confederates to "fire the Southern heart" and stimulate the interven-

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Davis, Proclamation, Dec. 23, 1862. W. R. Vol. XV., p. 907.

scalped and tomahawked, as our mothers were at Wyoming by the savage allies of Great Britain in our own Revolution; your property could have been turned over to indiscriminate 'loot,' like the palace of the Emperor of China; works of art which adorned your buildings might have been sent away, like the paintings of the Vatican; your sons might have been blown from the mouths of cannon, like the Sepoys at Delhi; and yet all this would have been within the rules of civilized warfare as practised by the most polished and the most hypocritical nations of Europe."—Parton, "General Butler in New Orleans," pp. 603, 604.

CHAP. XVI. tion of France and England, it would have merited no discussion except as a question of taste. In that respect it can no more be defended than can the unseemly parade of it as a Southern grievance; at the same time its salutary influence in checking the public misbehavior at which it was aimed will scarcely be denied.

However loud was the outcry against Butler's methods, there is a cheerful and universal admission of his energy and efficiency. Never in its long history was New Orleans so quiet, orderly, clean, and healthy. Though he rigorously exacted obedience to his police orders, and abstinence from public and private hostility to the flag and laws of his Government, he repaid the people a thousand-fold by keeping the wolf of starvation from their doors and the dreadful scourge of yellow fever out of their homes. The city was without provisions and without occupation; with trade stagnant, with supplies cut off, with industry paralyzed, with a worthless currency, with credit destroyed, with confidence gone, with poverty wide-spread and irremediable, with demoralization in every part of the social structure. These combined evils he grappled with intelligent resolution and the confidence born of an indomitable will. He distributed among the poor the captured Confederate rations. He allowed provisions already purchased by the city to be freely brought from Mobile and Red River; he organized relief associations. Finding certain lists of wealthy citizens who had subscribed a million and a quarter to the rebel war fund, he assessed them one-fourth their subscription and applied it to feeding the poor. This relief fund was augmented by contributions levied

on another list of merchants who had published a newspaper card advising planters not to send their produce to New Orleans. But he also made this relief fund serve a wider purpose than mere charity. He used it to employ from one to two thousand laborers every day "in cleaning the streets and building up the levees, and putting the city to rights, generally. All the drainage of the city is done by means of canals, and we cleaned out between ten and eleven miles of canal, some of which had not been cleaned for twelve or fifteen years. The consequence was that we had comparatively no sickness in the city of New Orleans. I had a regiment, a thousand strong, in the city during the months of July and August, and it buried but one man." This was one essential step, maintaining public health; but he did not neglect the other. "I established a very strict quarantine," continues his testimony. "I would not allow any vessel that came from an infected port to come up to the city under thirty days. If she had anything like a perishable cargo it was taken out and thoroughly overhauled and fumigated. . . I did allow a small steamer from New York to come up, the captain stating that he touched at Nassau merely to take in coal, and was there but a short time. It turned out, however, that he did take passengers on board, one of whom had the yellow fever after he arrived at New Orleans. I immediately had the square shut up completely, allowed no one to enter or leave it, whitewashed everything, cleaned the square up, fumigated it, and when the man died buried him and pretty much everything he had ever looked at. This ended the matter; we did not

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have another case of yellow fever in New Orleans. That, however, demonstrated the fact that yellow fever is not indigenous there, but requires to be imported, and that it may be quarantined even after it has been brought into the river. It perhaps can be fully done only by military measures, but it was effectually done there, although they had it everywhere on the coast,— at Matamoras, Galveston, Sabine Pass, and at Pensacola,— and I had five or six cases down at quarantine."

Butler, Testimony, Report Committee on Conduct of the War.

It must not be inferred that the rebels threw no obstacles in Butler's way. The persistent effort of the Mayor to recant his surrender of the city has been noted; and following out this policy, which was prompted from Richmond, secret machinations by prominent Confederates perplexed the commanding general at almost every step of his administration. They abused his permits to bring food, by secret mails and contraband supplies. The city authorities neglected efficient coöperation. The rebel Governor refused to allow provisions to be brought. Banks and corporations connived with foreign consuls to hide rebel funds. It was a running fight between loyal government and all the subterfuges which treason could invent, and Butler used his power of detection and punishment unsparingly upon willful offenders. But a fair balancing of motives and acts would show that in his hands military despotism, instead of bringing oppression and inflicting suffering, compelled the community to submit to peace and protection, to charity and bounty, to health and life. Under the teachings of its leaders, and its blind political rage, New Orleans had done its full share to create

Jefferson Davis to Monroe, April 28, 1862. W. R. Vol. VI., p. 884.

war; Butler, with autocratic will, forced upon it quiet and order. With suicidal folly it had created destitution and want and raised the gaunt specter of famine; with imperious authority Butler filled its hungry mouths and obliged it to reorganize industry and reëstablish trade. Through misrule and indolent neglect it had invited pestilence; Butler relentlessly constrained it to a cleanliness and health it had never experienced. One might almost transpose the Scripture parable to contrast their contumacious opposition and his beneficent compulsion. They asked a scorpion, and he gave them an egg; they asked a serpent, and he gave them a fish; they asked a stone, and he gave them bread. CHAP. XVI.

CHAPTER XVII

PEA RIDGE AND ISLAND NO. 10

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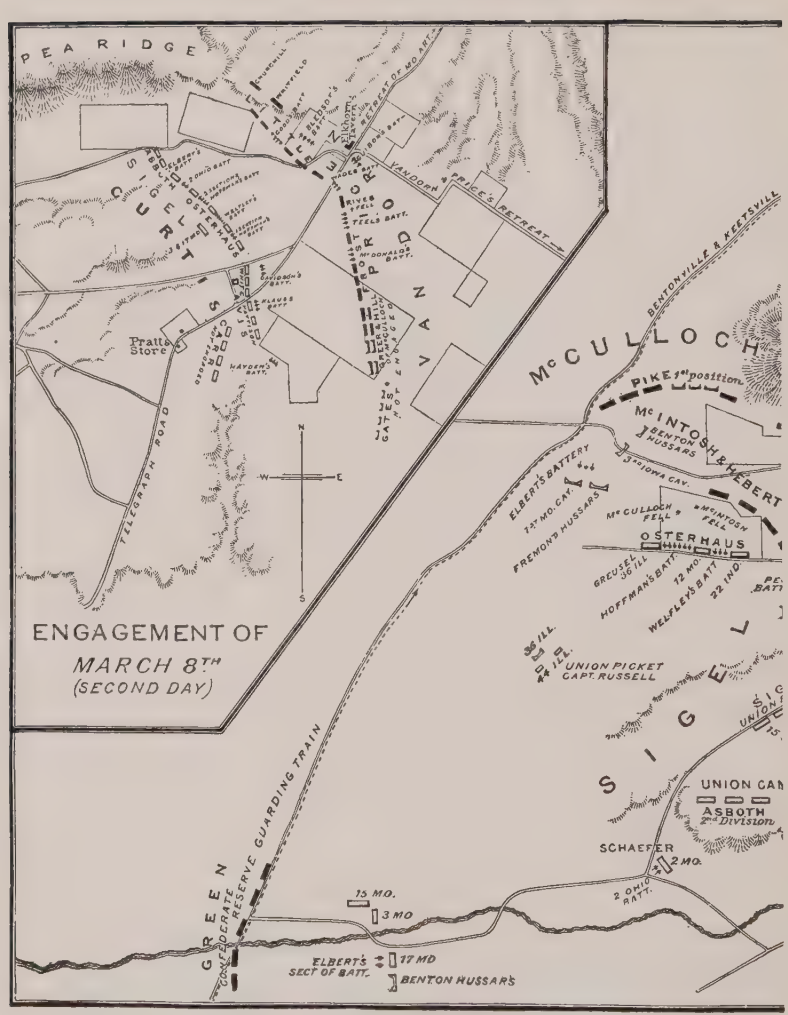
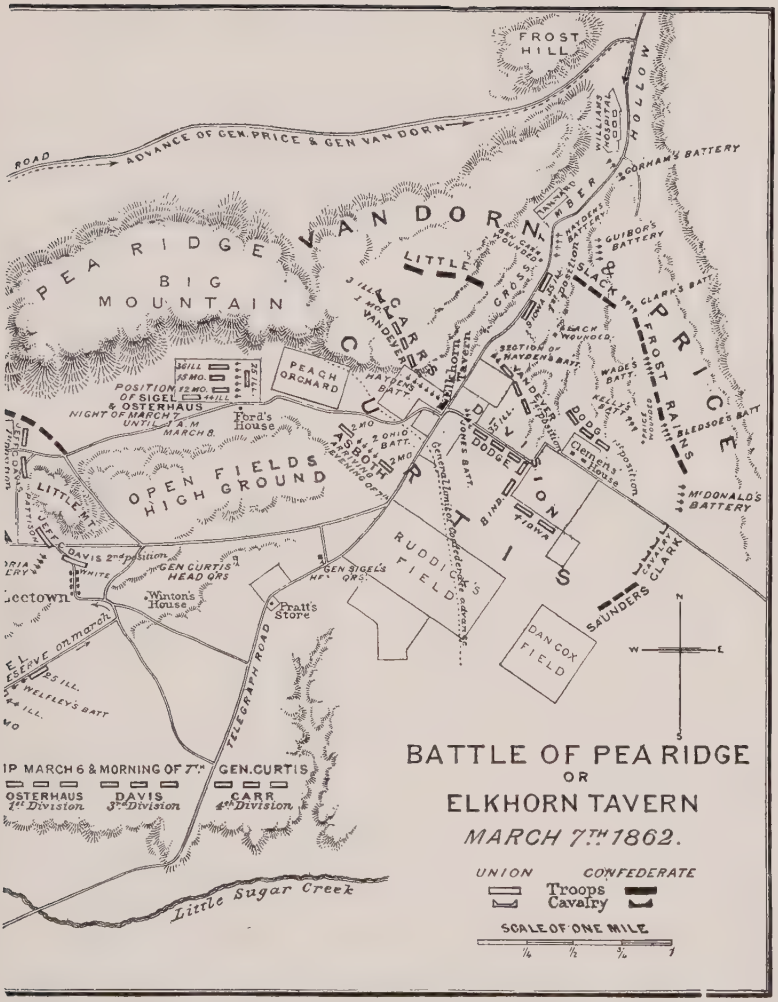
AS a powerful supplement to the Union victories in Tennessee, the military operations west of the Mississippi River next demand our attention. Under the vigorous promptings of Halleck we left the army of General S. R. Curtis engaged in his trying midwinter campaign in Southwestern Missouri. He made ready with all haste to comply with the order to "push on as rapidly as possible and end the matter with Price." His army obeyed every order with cheerful endurance. "They contend with mud, water, and snow and ice manfully," wrote Curtis under date of February 1, 1862, "and I trust they will not falter in the face of a more active foe." In the same spirit he encouraged his officers: "The roads are indeed very bad, but they are worse for the enemy than for us if he attempts to retreat. . . The men should help the teams out of difficulty when necessary, and all must understand that the elements are to be considered serious obstacles, which we have to encounter and overcome in this campaign. . . Constant bad roads will be the rule, and a change for the better a rare exception."

Curtis to Sigel, Feb. 1, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 541.


PEA RIDGE
CURTIS
VAN DORN
McCULLOCH
SIGEL
GREEN
Pratt's Store
TELEGRAPH ROAD
VANDORN & PRICE'S RETREAT
BENTONVILLE & KEETSVILL
PIKE 1st position
McINTOSH & HEBERT
BENTON HUSSARS
3rd IOWA CAV.
ELBERT'S BATTERY
1st MO. CAV.
FREMOND HUSSARS
McCULLOCH FELL
McINTOSH FELL
OSTERHAUS
GREUSEL 36 ILL
HOFFMAN'S BATT. 12 MO.
WELFLEY'S BATT 22 IND.
36 ILL.
44 ILL.
UNION PICKET CAPT. RUSSELL
UNION CAM
ASBOTH 2nd Division
SCHAEFER
2 MO.
2 OHIO BATT.
15 MO.
3 MO
17 MO
ELBERT'S SECT OF BATT.
BENTON HUSSARS
CONFEDERATE RESERVE GUARDING TRAIN
ENGAGEMENT OF
MARCH 8TH
(SECOND DAY)


BATTLE OF PEA RIDGE
OR
ELKHORN TAVERN
MARCH 7TH 1862.
UNION
CONFEDERATE
Troops
Cavalry
SCALE OF ONE MILE
1/4
1/2
3/4
1
N
S
E
W
FROST HILL
ADVANCE OF GEN. PRICE & GEN VAN DORN
ROAD
PEA RIDGE
BIG MOUNTAIN
VANDORN
LITTLE
CARR'S
CURTIS
PRICE
FROST RAINS
SLACK
CROSS
HOLLOW
GORHAM'S BATTERY
GUIBOR'S BATTERY
CLARK'S BATT
WADE'S BATT
BLEDSOE'S BATT
McDONALD'S BATTERY
SAUNDERS CLARK
CAVALRY
DAN COX FIELD
RUDDICK'S FIELD
DODGE
DIVISION
Clemens' House
Elkhorn Tavern
PEACH ORCHARD
HAYDEN'S BATT.
Ford's House
POSITION OF SIGEL & OSTERHAUS NIGHT OF MARCH 7 UNTIL 1 A.M. MARCH 8.
OPEN FIELDS HIGH GROUND
LITTLE MT.
JEFF DAVIS 2nd position
GEN CURTIS HEAD QRS
Winton's House
Pratt's Store
GEN SIGEL'S HEAD QRS.
TELEGRAPH ROAD
Lectown
WELFLEY'S BATT
Little Sugar Creek
IP MARCH 6 & MORNING OF 7TH
GEN. CURTIS
OSTERHAUS 1st Division
DAVIS 3rd Division
CARR 4th Division

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As already remarked, Price had kept his situation and numbers well concealed. He was known to be at Springfield; but rumor exaggerated his force to thirty thousand, and it was uncertain whether he intended to retreat or advance. Reports also came that Van Dorn was marching to his support with ten thousand men. Curtis kept the offensive, however, pushing forward his outposts. By the 13th of February Price found his position untenable and ordered a retreat from Springfield. Since McCulloch would not come to Missouri to furnish Price assistance, Price was perforce compelled to go to Arkansas, where McCulloch might furnish him protection. Curtis pursued with vigor. "We continually take cattle, prisoners, wagons, and arms, which they leave in their flight," he wrote. Near the Arkansas line Price endeavored to make a stand with his rear-guard, but without success. On February 18, in a special order announcing the recent Union victories elsewhere, Curtis was able to congratulate his own troops as follows: "You have moved in the most inclement weather, over the worst of roads, making extraordinary long marches, subsisting mainly on meat without salt, and for the past six days you have been under the fire of the fleeing enemy. You have driven him out of Missouri, restored the Union flag to the virgin soil of Arkansas, and triumphed in two contests."

McKenney, Orders, Feb. 18, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 560.

The rebels were in no condition to withstand him, and he moved forward to Cross Hollow, where the enemy had hastily abandoned a large cantonment with extensive buildings, only a portion of which they stopped to burn. It was time for Curtis

CH. XVII. to pause. He was 240 miles from his railroad base at Rolla, where he had begun his laborious march. Orders soon came from Halleck not to penetrate farther into Arkansas, but to hold his position and keep the enemy south of the Boston Mountains. "Hold your position," wrote Halleck, March 7, "till I can turn the enemy." At that date Halleck expected to make a land march along what he deemed to be the central strategic line southward from Fort Donelson, turn the enemy at Memphis, and compel the Confederate forces to evacuate the whole Mississippi Valley down to that point.

There was, however, serious work yet in store for Curtis. To obviate the jealousies and bickerings among Trans-Mississippi Confederate commanders, the Richmond authorities had combined the Indian Territory with portions of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri in the Trans-Mississippi District of Department No. II., and had sent Major-General Earl Van Dorn to command the whole. His letters show that he went full of enthusiasm and brilliant anticipations. He did not dream of being kept on the defensive. He called for troops from Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, and ordered the armies of McCulloch and Colonel James McIntosh, and General Albert Pike with his Indian regiments, to join him. From these various sources he hoped to collect a force of 40,000 men at Pocahontas, Arkansas. Unaware that Price was then retreating from Springfield, he wrote to that commander, under date of February 14, proposing a quick and secret march against St. Louis, which he hoped to capture by assault. Holding that city would soon secure Missouri and relieve John-

Jan. 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 734.

ston, seriously pressed in Tennessee. He would not wait to prepare, but would adopt the style of frontier equipment and supply: "Flour, salt, and a little bacon in our wagons, and beef cattle driven with us, should be our commissariat. Grain-bags, to contain two days' rations of corn, to be carried on our troopers' saddles, and money our paymaster's department, and sufficient ammunition our ordnance department."

Van Dorn to Price, Feb. 14, 1862, and Van Dorn to Price, Feb. 7, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 749, 751.

But he did not have time enough to extemporize even his haversack campaign. He found his base of supplies menaced from the northeast, and information soon followed that Price was flying in confusion from the northwest. Ten days later we find him writing to Johnston: "Price and McCulloch are concentrated at Cross Hollow. . . Whole force of enemy [Union] from 35,000 to 40,000; ours about 20,000. Should Pike be able to join, our forces will be about 26,000. I leave this evening to go to the army, and will give battle, of course, if it does not take place before I arrive. I have no doubt of the result. If I succeed, I shall push on." Van Dorn found the Confederate forces united in the Boston Mountains, fifty-five miles south of Sugar Creek, to which point Curtis had retired for better security. He immediately advanced with his whole force, attacking the Union position on the 6th of March. On the 7th was fought the principal contest, known as the battle of Pea Ridge, or Elkhorn Tavern. As usual, rumor exaggerated the forces on both sides. By the official reports it appears that Van Dorn's available command numbered 16,202. The Union troops under Curtis numbered only about 10,500, but they had the advantage of a de-

Van Dorn to Mackall, Feb. 24, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 755.

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fensive attitude, and gained a complete victory, to which the vigilance and able strategy of the Union commander effectively contributed.

The Confederate attack on the afternoon of the 6th appears to have been the mere pursuit of Curtis's retiring outpost. That night Van Dorn made a bold flank movement, gaining Curtis's right and rear. Curtis, however, became informed in time, and skillfully changed his whole line, and in a stronger position again confronted the enemy in perfect order. The rebel attack of the 7th was mainly on Curtis's center and right. Generals McCulloch, McIntosh, and other prominent rebel officers were killed early in the action, and the onset was thereby greatly disconcerted and confused. The Union troops fought with a gallant and stubborn courage throughout the whole of the 7th. During the night Curtis once more re-formed his lines and himself advanced to the attack on the morning of the 8th, quickly driving the Confederates into precipitate and scattered retreat. The Union loss was, 203 killed, 980 wounded, and 201 captured or missing; while the Confederate loss, not so accurately ascertained, was estimated to be between 1000 and 1300. In the official report of the Union commander pointed complaint is made that the Indian allies of the rebels, which Pike had brought from the Indian Territory, were in some instances guilty of the atrocities peculiar to savages; that the wounded were scalped, tomahawked, and otherwise mutilated; the distinct evidence of eyewitnesses is cited as to eight or ten cases. General Pike's official report states that he brought nearly a thousand Indians to the battle, mainly as cavalry,

Noble to Curtis, April 12, 1862, and Bussey to Curtis, May 11, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., pp. 206–208.

Pike, Report, March 14, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 288.

and their untamed instincts might easily have lapsed into a wider barbarity. But the Union cause is not free to cast reproaches on the Confederates for the use of the Indians. It was not long before the War Department at Washington authorized the enlistment of five thousand friendly Indians for Union service.

Thomas to Halleck, March 19, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 624.

The diminished and scattered forces of Van Dorn, retreating by different routes from the battle of Pea Ridge, were not again wholly united. Pike was ordered to conduct his Indian regiments back to the Indian Territory for local duty. The main remnant of the Confederate army followed Van Dorn to the eastward in the direction of Pocahontas, where he proposed to reorganize it, and to resume the offensive. Halleck, cautioning Curtis to hold his position and keep well on his guard, speaks of Van Dorn as a "vigilant and energetic officer"; and Van Dorn's language certainly indicates activity, whatever may be thought of the discretion it betrays. He had hardly shaken from his feet the dust of his rout at Pea Ridge when he again began writing that he contemplated relieving the stress of Confederate disaster in Tennessee by attempting to capture the city of St. Louis, a will-o'-the-wisp project that had by turns dazzled the eyes of all the Confederate commanders in the Mississippi Valley; or, as another scheme, perhaps a mere prelude to this, he would march eastward against Pope and raise the siege of New Madrid, on the Mississippi River. This brings us to a narrative of events at that point.

Van Dorn to Johnston, March 18, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 790.

With the fall of Fort Donelson the rebel stronghold at Columbus had become useless. Its evacua-

CH. XVII. tion soon followed (March 2, 1862), and the Confederates immediately turned their attention to holding the next barrier on the Mississippi River. This was at a point less than one hundred miles below Cairo, where the Father of Waters makes two large bends, which, joined together, lie like a reversed letter S placed horizontally. At the foot of this first bend lay Island No. 10; from there the river flows northwards to the town of New Madrid, Missouri, passing which it resumes its southward course. The country is not only flat, as the bend indicates, but it is encompassed in almost all directions by nearly impassable swamps and bayous. Island No. 10, therefore, and its immediate neighborhood, seemed to offer unusual advantages to bar the Mississippi with warlike obstructions. As soon as the evacuation of Columbus was determined upon, all available rebel resources and skill were concentrated here. The island, the Tennessee shore of the river, and the town of New Madrid were strongly fortified and occupied with considerable garrisons — about 3000 men at the former and some 5000 at the latter place.

General Halleck, studying the strategical conditions of the whole Mississippi Valley with tenfold interest since the victories of Grant, also had his eye on this position, and was now as eager to capture it as the rebels were to defend it. One of the quickest movements of the whole war ensued. General John Pope was selected to lead the expedition, and the choice was not misplaced. On the 22d of February, six days after the surrender of Fort Donelson, Pope landed at the town of Commerce,

Missouri, on the Mississippi River, with 140 men. CH. XVII.
On the 28th he was on the march at the head of 10,000, who had been sent him in the interim from St. Louis and Cairo. On the 3d of March, at one 1862.
o'clock in the afternoon, he appeared before the town of New Madrid with his whole force, to which further reënforcements were soon added, raising his army to about 20,000. It would have required but a few hours to capture the place by assault, but the loss of life would have been great and the sacrifice virtually useless. It was the season of the early spring floods; the whole country was submerged, and the river was at a very high stage between its levees. In addition to its earthworks and its garrison, New Madrid was guarded by a fleet of eight rebel gunboats under command of Commodore George N. Hollins. The high water floated these vessels at such an elevation that their guns commanded every part of the town, and made its occupation by hostile troops impossible. Had Pope entered with his army, Hollins would have destroyed both town and troops at his leisure.

Pope therefore surrounded the place with siege-works in which he could protect his men; and sending a detachment to Point Pleasant on the river, nine miles below, secured a lodgment for batteries that closed the river to rebel transports and cut off the enemy's reënforcements and supplies. The movement proved effectual. Ten days later (March 13, 1862) the rebels evacuated New Madrid, leaving everything behind. The Confederates now held Island No. 10 and the Tennessee shore, but their retreat was cut off by the swamps beyond and Pope's batteries below. The rebel gun-

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boat flotilla had retired down the river. Pope's forces held New Madrid and the Missouri shore, but they had neither transports nor gunboats, and without these could not cross to the attack. In this dilemma Pope once more called upon Flag-officer Foote to bring the Union fleet of gunboats down the river, attack and silence the batteries of Island No. 10, and assist in capturing the rebel army, which his strategy had shut in a trap.

Foote, although commanding a fleet of nine Union gunboats, objected that the difficulty and risk were too great. With all their formidable strength the gunboats had two serious defects. Only their bows were protected by the heavier iron plating so as to be shot-proof, and their engines were not strong enough to back easily against the powerful current of the Mississippi. In their attacks on Forts Henry and Donelson they had fought up-stream; when disabled, the mere current carried them out of the enemy's reach. On the Mississippi this was reversed. Compelled to fight down-stream, they would, if disabled, be carried directly towards the enemy. A bombardment at long range from both gun and mortar boats had proved ineffectual to silence the rebel batteries. Pope's expedition seemed destined to prove fruitless, when a new expedient was the occasion of success.

The project of a canal to turn Island No. 10 was revived.[1] The floods of the Mississippi, pouring through breaks in the levees, inundated the surrounding country. Colonel J. W. Bissell, of the en-

Pope to Bissell, March 19, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 625.

[1] General Schuyler Hamilton claims to have suggested this plan; and his claim is supported by General Pope's official report of May 2, 1862.—War Records, Volume VIII., page 86.

gineer regiment, returning in a canoe with a guide from his unsuccessful visit to secure Foote's coöperation, learned that a bayou, from two and a half to three miles west of the Mississippi, ran irregularly to the southwest from the neighborhood of Island No. 8, the station of the Union gunboat flotilla, to its junction with the river at New Madrid, a distance of twelve miles. An open cornfield and an opening in the woods, which marked the course of an old road, suggested the possibility of connecting the river with the bayou; but between the end of the road and the bayou lay a belt of heavy timber two miles in width. How could he get a fleet of vessels over the ground thickly covered by trees of every size, from a sapling to a forest veteran three feet in diameter, whose roots stood six or seven feet under water? Modern mechanical appliances are not easily baffled by natural obstacles. Six hundred skillful mechanics working with the aid of steam and machinery, and directed by American inventive ingenuity, brought the wonder to pass. In a few days Colonel Bissell had a line of four light-draft steamboats and six coal-barges [1] crossing the cornfield and entering the open road. Great saws, bent in the form of an arc and fastened to frames swinging on pivots, severed the tree-trunks four and a half feet under water; ropes, pulleys, and capstans hauled the encumbering débris out of the path. In eight days the amphibious fleet was in the bayou. Here were new difficulties — to clear away the dams of accumulated and entangled drift-wood.

J. W. Bissell, "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War." Vol. I., p. 460.

[1] The barges used were coal-barges, about eighty feet long and twenty wide, scow-shaped, with both ends alike. The sides were six inches thick, and of solid timber. — J. W. Bissell, "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War." Vol. I., p. 461.

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In a few days more Bissell's boats and barges were ready to emerge into the Mississippi at New Madrid, but yet kept prudently concealed. Two gunboats were needed to protect the transports in crossing troops. The sagacious judgment of Foote and the heroism of his subordinates supplied these at the opportune moment. Commander Henry Walke of the *Carondelet* volunteered to run the batteries at Island No. 10; and, now that the risk was justified, the flag-officer consented. On the night of the 4th of April, after the moon had gone down, the gunboat *Carondelet*, moving with as little noise as possible, swung into the stream from her moorings and started on her perilous voyage. It must have seemed an omen of success that a sudden thunder-storm with its additional gloom and noise came up to aid the attempt. The movement was unsuspected by the enemy till, by one of the frequent flashes of lightning, the rebel sentries on the earthworks of Island No. 10 and the shore batteries opposite, saw the huge turtle-shaped river craft stand out in vivid outline, to be in a second hidden again by the dense obscurity. Alarm cries rang out, musketry rattled, great guns resounded; the ship almost touched the shore in the drift of the crooked channel. But the Confederate guns could not be aimed amidst the swift succession of brilliant flashes and total darkness. The rebel missiles flew wild, and a little after midnight the *Carondelet* lay unharmed at the New Madrid landing. Commander Walke had made the first successful experiment in a feat of daring and skill that was many times repeated after he had demonstrated its possibility.

Foote to Walke, March 30, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 121.

The gunboat *Pittsburgh*, also running past the

rebel batteries at night, joined the *Carondelet* at New Madrid on the morning of April 7, and the problem of Pope's difficulties was solved. When he crossed his troops over the river by help of his gunboats and transports, formidable attack was no longer necessary. Island No. 10 had surrendered to Flag-officer Foote that morning, and the several rebel garrisons were using their utmost endeavors to effect a retreat southward. Pope easily intercepted their movement; on that and the following day he received the surrender of three general officers and six or seven thousand Confederate troops.

Foote to Welles, April 7, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 669.

Pope to Halleck, April 8, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 675.

As General Pope's victory had been gained without loss or demoralization, he prepared immediately to push his operations farther south. "If transportation arrives to-morrow or next day," telegraphed Assistant Secretary Scott, who was with him at New Madrid, "we shall have Memphis within ten days." Halleck responded with the promise of ten large steamers to carry troops, and other suggestions indicating his approval of the movement "down the river." In the same dispatch Halleck gave news of the Union victory at Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River, and announced his intention to proceed thither, and asked Assistant Secretary Scott to meet him at Cairo for consultation. The meeting took place on the 10th of April, by which time Halleck had become more impressed with the severity and the perils of the late battle on the Tennessee; for Scott asked the Washington authorities whether a reënforcement of 20,000 or 30,000 men could not be sent from the East to make good the loss. This

CH. XVII. conference probably originated the idea that soon interrupted the successful river operations, by withdrawing the army under Pope. Reënforcements could not be spared from the East, and Pope's army became the next resource. For the present, however, there was a continuation of the first plan.

Pope's preliminary orders for embarkation were issued on the 10th, and on the 14th the combined land and naval forces which had reduced Island No. 10 reached Fort Pillow. Its works were found to be strong and extensive. The overflow of the whole country rendered land operations difficult; it was estimated that it would require two weeks to turn the position and reduce the works. Meanwhile information was obtained that Van Dorn's rebel army from Arkansas was about to reënforce Beauregard at Corinth. In view of all this, Assistant Secretary Scott asked the question: "If General Pope finds, after careful examination, that he cannot capture Fort Pillow within ten days, had he not better reënforce General Halleck immediately and let Commodore Foote continue to blockade below until forces can be returned and the position be turned by General Halleck beating Beauregard and marching upon Memphis from Corinth?" Before an answer came from the War Department at Washington, Halleck, who had for several days been with the army on the Tennessee River, decided the question for himself and telegraphed to Pope (April 15), "Move with your army to this place, leaving troops enough with Commodore Foote to land and hold Fort Pillow, should the enemy's forces withdraw." At the same time he

Thomas A. Scott to Stanton, April 15, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 107.

sent the following suggestion to Flag-officer Foote: "I have ordered General Pope's army to this place, but I think you had best continue the bombardment of Fort Pillow; and if the enemy should abandon it, take possession or go down the river, as you may deem best. General Pope will leave forces enough to occupy any fortifications that may be taken."

Halleck to Foote, April 15, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 108.

The plan was forthwith carried into effect. The transports, instead of disembarking Pope's troops to invest Fort Pillow, were turned northward, and steaming up the Mississippi to Cairo, thence to Paducah, and from Paducah up the Tennessee River, landed the whole of Pope's army, except two regiments, at Pittsburg Landing, on the 22d of April. The flotilla under Foote and the two regiments left behind continued in front of Fort Pillow, keeping up a show of attack, by a bombardment from one of the mortar-boats and such reconnaissances as the little handful of troops could venture, to discover if possible some weak point in the enemy's defenses. On the other hand, the Confederates, watching what they thought a favorable opportunity, brought up eight of their gunboats, and made a spirited attack on the Union vessels on the morning of May 10. In a short combat two of the Union gunboats, which bore the brunt of the onset, were seriously disabled, though not until they had inflicted such damage on three Confederate vessels that they drifted helplessly out of the fight; after which the remainder of the rebel flotilla retired from the encounter. For nearly a month after this preliminary gunboat battle the river operations, though full of excit-

CH. XVII. ing daily incident, were marked by no very important event. Mention, however, needs to be here made of a change in the control of the Union fleet. Flag-officer Foote had been wounded in the ankle during his attack on Fort Donelson, and his injury now caused him so much suffering and exhaustion of strength that he was compelled to relinquish his command. He took leave of his
1862. flotilla on the 9th of May, and was succeeded by Captain Charles H. Davis, who from that time onward had charge of the gunboat operations on the upper Mississippi.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SHILOH CAMPAIGN

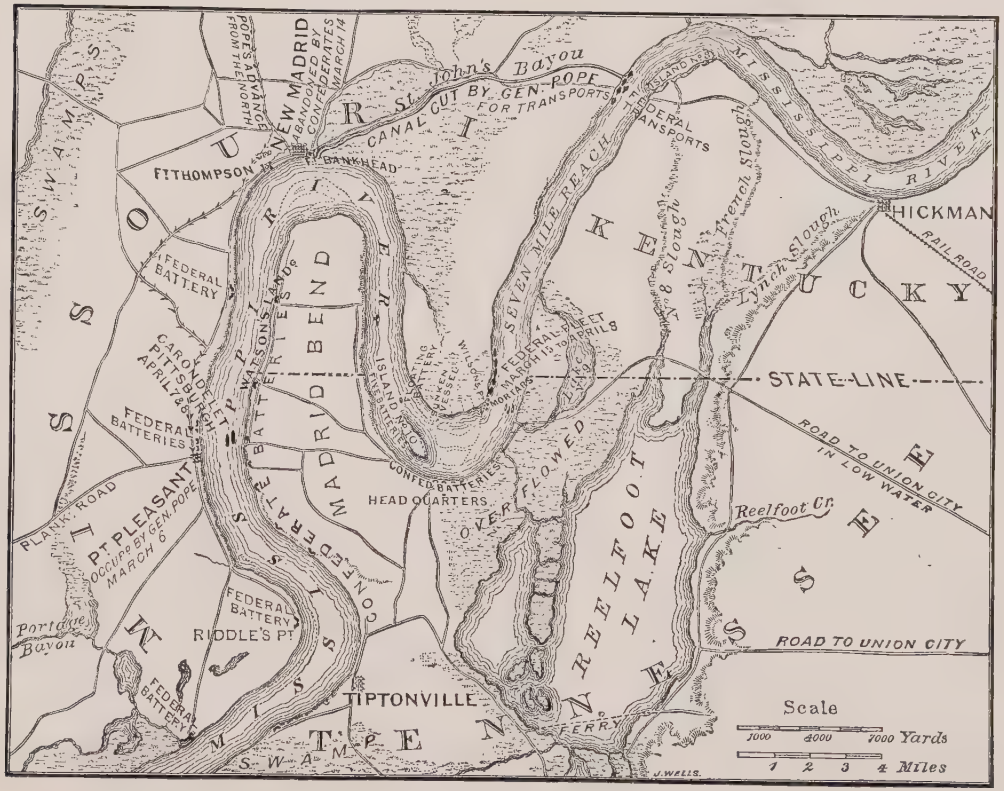
THE fall of Fort Donelson hastened, almost to a panic, the retreat of the Confederates from other points. By that surrender about one-third of their fighting force in Tennessee vanished from the campaign, while their whole web of strategy was instantly dissolved. The full possession of the Tennessee River by the Union gunboats for the moment hopelessly divided the Confederate commands, and like a flushed covey of birds the rebel generals started on their several lines of retreat without concert or rallying point. Albert Sidney Johnston, the department commander, moved southeast towards Chattanooga, abandoning Nashville to its fate; while Beauregard, left to his own discretion and resources, took measures to effect the evacuation of Columbus so as to save its armament and supplies, and then proceeded to the railroad crossings of Northern Mississippi to collect and organize a new army.

It is now evident that if the Union forces could have been promptly moved forward in harmonious combination, with the facility which the opening of the Tennessee River afforded them, such an advance might have been made, and such stra-

CH. XVIII. tegic points gained and held, as would have saved at least an entire year of campaign and battle in the West. Unfortunately this great advantage was not seized, and in the condition of affairs could not be; and a delay of a fortnight or more enabled the insurgents to renew the confidence and gather the forces to establish another line farther to the south, and again to interpose a formidable resistance. One cause of this inefficiency and delay of the Union commanders may be easily gleaned from the dispatches interchanged by them within a few days succeeding the fall of Fort Donelson, and which, aside from their military bearings, form an interesting study of human nature.

General Buell, from his headquarters at Louisville, wrote (February 17, 1862) that since the reënforcements (Nelson's division) started by him to assist at Fort Donelson were no longer needed, he had ordered them back. "The object of both our forces," he continued, "is, directly or indirectly, to strike at the power of the rebellion in its most vital point within our field. Nashville appears clearly, I think, to be that point." He thought further that heavy reënforcements would soon be thrown into it by the rebels. The leisurely manner in which he expected to strike at this heart of the rebellion appears from these words in the same letter: "To depend on wagons at this season for a large force seems out of the question, and I fear it may be two weeks before I can get a bridge over the Barren River, so as to use the railroad beyond. I shall endeavor, however, to make an advance in less or much force before that time. . . Let me hear your views."

Buell to Halleck, Feb. 17, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 630.



MAP OF MILITARY AND NAVAL OPERATIONS ABOUT ISLAND NUMBER TEN.

Halleck, at St. Louis, was agitated by more rapid emotions. Watching the distant and dangerous campaign under Curtis in Southwestern Missouri, beginning another of mingled hazard and brilliant promise under Pope on the Mississippi, beset by perplexities of local administration, flushed to fever heat by the unexpected success of Grant, his mind ran forward eagerly to new prospects. "I am not satisfied with present success," he telegraphed Sherman. "We must now prepare for a still more important movement. You will not be forgotten in this." But this preparation seems, in his mind, to have involved something more than orders from himself. CH. XVIII.

Halleck to Sherman, Feb. 17, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 629.

Before he received the news of the surrender of Fort Donelson he became seriously alarmed lest the rebels, using their river transportation, might rapidly concentrate, attack Grant in the rear, crush him before succor could reach him, and returning quickly, be as ready as before to confront and oppose Buell. Even after the surrender Halleck manifests a continuing fear that some indefinite concentration will take place, and a quick reprisal be executed by a formidable expedition against Paducah or Cairo. His overstrained appeals to Buell for help do not seem justified in the full light of history. An undertone of suggestion and demand indicates that this urgency, while based on his patriotic eagerness for success, was not wholly free from personal ambition.

We have seen how, when he heard of Grant's victory, he generously asked that Buell, Grant, and Pope be made major-generals of volunteers, and with equal generosity to himself broadly added,

CH. XVIII. "and give me command in the West." He could not agree with Buell that Nashville was the most vital point of the rebellion in the West, and that heavy rebel reënforcements would be thrown into it from all quarters east and south. Halleck develops his idea with great earnestness in replying to that suggestion from Buell. He says:

Halleck to Buell, Feb. 18, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 632, 633.

> To remove all questions as to rank, I have asked the President to make you a major-general. Come down to the Cumberland and take command. The battle of the West is to be fought in that vicinity. You should be in it as the ranking general in immediate command. Don't hesitate. Come to Clarksville as rapidly as possible. Say that you will come, and I will have everything there for you. Beauregard threatens to attack either Cairo or Paducah; I must be ready for him. Don't stop any troops ordered down the Ohio. We want them all. You shall have them back in a few days. Assistant Secretary of War Scott left here this afternoon to confer with you. He knows my plans and necessities. I am terribly hard pushed. Help me, and I will help you. Hunter has acted nobly, generously, bravely. Without his aid I should have failed before Fort Donelson. Honor to him. We came within an ace of being defeated. If the fragments which I sent down had not reached there on Saturday we should have gone in. A retreat at one time seemed almost inevitable. All right now. Help me to carry it out. Talk freely with Scott. It is evident to me that you and McClellan did not at last accounts appreciate the strait I have been in. I am certain you will when you understand it all. Help me, I beg of you. Throw all your troops in the direction of the Cumberland. Don't stop any one ordered here. You will not regret it. There will be no battle at Nashville.

In answer to an inquiry from Assistant Secretary Scott, he explained further: "I mean that Buell should move on Clarksville with his present column; there unite his Kentucky army and move

up the Cumberland, while I act on the Tennessee. We should then be able to coöperate." This proposal was entirely judicious, but in Halleck's mind it was subordinated to another consideration, namely, that he should exercise superior command in the West. Again he telegraphed to McClellan (February 19), "Give it [the Western division] to me, and I will split secession in twain in one month." The same confidence is also expressed to Buell, in a simultaneous dispatch to Assistant Secretary Scott, who was with Buell. "If General Buell will come down and help me with all possible haste we can end the war in the West in less than a month." A day later Halleck becomes almost peremptory in a dispatch to McClellan: "I must have command of the armies in the West. Hesitation and delay are losing us the golden opportunity. Lay this before the President and Secretary of War. May I assume the command? Answer quickly."

Ch. XVIII. Halleck to Thomas A. Scott, Feb. 20, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 642.

W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 636, 637, 641.

To this direct interrogatory McClellan replied in the negative. The request was hardly couched in proper terms to find ready acquiescence from a military superior. In this case, however, it was also calculated to rouse a twofold instinct of jealousy. Buell was a warm personal friend of McClellan, and the latter could not be expected to diminish the opportunities or endanger the chances of his favorite. But more important yet was the question how this sudden success in Halleck's department, and the extension of command and power so boldly demanded, might affect McClellan's own standing and authority. He was yet general-in-chief, but the Administration was dissatisfied at his inaction,

CH. XVIII. and the President had indicated, in the general war order requiring all the armies of the United States to move on the 22d of February, that his patience had a limit. McClellan did not believe that the army under his own immediate care and command would be ready to fulfill the President's order. Should he permit a rival to arise in the West and grasp a great victory before he could move?

An hour after midnight McClellan answered Halleck as follows: "Buell at Bowling Green knows more of the state of affairs than you at St. Louis. Until I hear from him I cannot see necessity of giving you entire command. I expect to hear from Buell in a few minutes. I do not yet see that Buell cannot control his own line. I shall not lay your request before the Secretary until I hear definitely from Buell." Halleck did not feel wholly baffled by the unfavorable response. That day he received a dispatch from Stanton, who said: "Your plan of organization has been transmitted to me by Mr. Scott and strikes me very favorably, but on account of the domestic affliction of the President I have not yet been able to submit it to him. The brilliant result of the energetic action in the West fills the nation with joy."

McClellan to Halleck, Feb. 21, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 645.

Stanton to Halleck, Feb. 21, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 648.

Encouraged by this friendly tone from the Secretary of War, Halleck ventured a final appeal: "One whole week has been lost already by hesitation and delay. There was, and I think there still is, a golden opportunity to strike a fatal blow, but I can't do it unless I can control Buell's army. I am perfectly willing to act as General McClellan dictates or to take any amount of responsibility.

To succeed we must be prompt. I have explained everything to General McClellan and Assistant Secretary Scott. There is not a moment to be lost. Give me authority, and I will be responsible for results." Doubtless Halleck felt that the Fates were against him, for the reply chilled his lingering hopes: "Your telegram of yesterday, together with Mr. Scott's reports, have this morning been submitted to the President, who, after full consideration of the subject, does not think any change in the organization of the army or the military departments at present advisable. He desires and expects you and General Buell to coöperate fully and zealously with each other, and would be glad to know whether there has been any failure of coöperation in any particular."

Halleck to Stanton, Feb. 21, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 655.

Stanton to Halleck, Feb. 22, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 652.

Mr. Lincoln had been watching by the bedside of his dying son, and in his overwhelming grief probably felt disinclined to touch this new vexation of military selfishness — a class of questions from which he always shrank with the utmost distaste; besides, we shall see in due time how the President's momentary decision turned upon much more comprehensive changes already in contemplation. Before McClellan's refusal to enlarge Halleck's command he had indicated that his judgment and feelings were with Buell. Thus he telegraphed the latter on February 20: "Halleck says Columbus reënforced from New Orleans, and steam up on their boats ready for move — probably on Cairo. Wishes to withdraw some troops from Donelson. I tell him improbable that rebels [are] reënforced from New Orleans or attack Cairo. Think [they] will abandon Columbus. . . How soon can you be

CH. XVIII. in front of Nashville, and in what force? What news of the rebels? If the force in West can take Nashville, or even hold its own for the present, I hope to have Richmond and Norfolk in from three to four weeks." He sent a similar dispatch to Halleck, in which he pointed out Nashville as the pressing objective. "Buell has gone to Bowling Green. I will be in communication with him in a few minutes, and we will then arrange. The fall of Clarksville confirms my views. I think Cairo is not in danger, and that we must now direct our efforts on Nashville. The rebels hold firm at Manassas. In less than two weeks I shall move the Army of the Potomac, and hope to be in Richmond soon after you are in Nashville. I think Columbus will be abandoned within a week. We will have a desperate battle on this line."

McClellan to Buell, Feb. 20, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 640.

McClellan to Halleck, Feb. 20, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., pp. 640, 641.

While the three generals were discussing high strategy and grand campaigns by telegraph, and probably deliberating with more anxiety the possibilities of personal fame, the simple soldiering of Grant and Foote was solving some of the problems that confused scientific hypothesis. They quietly occupied Clarksville, which the enemy abandoned; and even while preparing to do so, Grant suggested in his dispatch of February 19, "If it is the desire of the general commanding department, I can have Nashville on Saturday week." Foote repeated the suggestion in a dispatch of February 21, but the coveted permission did not come in time.

Grant to Cullum, Feb. 19, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 637.

Meanwhile Buell, having gone to Bowling Green to push forward his railroad bridge, and hearing of the fall of Clarksville and the probable abandonment of Nashville, moved on by forced marches

with a single division, reaching the Cumberland opposite the city on the 25th. The enemy had burned the bridge and he could not cross; but almost simultaneously he witnessed the arrival of steamboats bringing General Nelson's division, which immediately landed and occupied the place. This officer and his troops, after several varying orders, were finally sent up the Cumberland to Grant, and ordered forward by him to occupy Nashville and join Buell. It was a curious illustration of dramatic justice that the struggle of the generals over the capture of the place should end in the possession of Nashville by the troops of Buell under the orders of Grant, whose name had not once been mentioned by the contending commanders.

For a few days succeeding the occupation of Nashville news and rumors of what the rebels were doing were very conflicting, and none of the Union commanders suggested any definite campaign. On February 26 Halleck ordered preparations for a movement up either the Tennessee or the Cumberland, as events might require; but for two days he could not determine which. Finally, on the 1st of March, he sent distinct orders to Grant to command an expedition up the Tennessee River, to destroy the railroad and cut the telegraph at Eastport, Corinth, Jackson, and Humboldt. This was to be, not a permanent army advance, but a temporary raid by gunboats and troops on transports; all of which, after effecting what local destruction they could, were to return — the whole movement being merely auxiliary to the operations then in progress against New Madrid and Island No. 10,

Halleck to Grant, March 1, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 674.

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designed to hasten the fall of Columbus. It turned out that the preparations could not be made as quickly as Halleck had hoped; the delay arising, not from the fault or neglect of any officer, but mainly from the prevailing and constantly increasing floods in the Western waters, and especially from damage to telegraph lines that seriously hindered the prompt transmission of communications and orders. Out of this latter condition there also grew the episode of a serious misunderstanding between Halleck and Grant, which threatened to obscure the new and brilliant fame which the latter was earning.

Only a moment of vexation and ill-temper can account for the harsh accusation Halleck sent to Washington, that Grant had left his post without leave, that he had failed to make reports, that he and his army were demoralized by the Donelson victory. Reply came back that generals must observe discipline as well as privates. "Do not hesitate to arrest him [Grant] at once," added McClellan, "if the good of the service requires it, and place C. F. Smith in command." Halleck immediately acted on the suggestion, ordered Grant to remain at Fort Henry, and gave the proposed Tennessee expedition to Smith. Grant obeyed, and at first explained, with an admirable control of temper, that he had not been in fault. Later on, however, feeling himself wronged, he several times asked to be relieved from duty. By this time Halleck was convinced that he had unjustly accused Grant and as peremptorily declined to relieve him, and ordered him to resume his former general command. "Instead of relieving you," he added, "I wish you, as soon as your new army is in the field, to assume

McClellan to Halleck, approved by Stanton, March 3, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 680.

Halleck to Grant, March 13, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 32.

the immediate command and lead it on to new victories." In truth, while neither general had been unjust by intention, both had been blamable in conduct. Grant violated technical discipline in leaving his command without permission; Halleck, with undue haste, preferred an accusation which further information proved to be groundless. It is to the credit of both that they dismissed the incipient quarrel and with new zeal and generous confidence immediately joined in public service. CH. XVIII

While the Grant-Halleck controversy and preparations for the Tennessee River expedition were in progress, the military situation was day by day slowly defining itself, though as yet without very specific action or conclusion. Buell, becoming satisfied that the enemy had no immediate intention to return and attack him at Nashville, inquired, on March 3, of Halleck: "What can I do to aid your operations against Columbus?" To this Halleck replied on the 4th with the information that Columbus had been evacuated, and asked, "Why not come to the Tennessee and operate with me to cut Johnston's line with Memphis, Randolph, and New Madrid?" Without committing himself definitely, Buell answered on the 6th, merely proposing that they should meet at Louisville to discuss details. Halleck, however, unable to spare the time, held tenaciously to his proposition, informing Assistant Secretary Scott, at Cairo, of the situation in these words: "I telegraphed to General Buell to reënforce me as strongly as possible at or near Savannah [Tennessee]. Their line of defense is now an oblique one, extending from Island No. 10 to Decatur or Chattanooga. Having destroyed the railroad and 1862.

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Halleck to T. A. Scott, March 7, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 16.

bridges in his rear, Johnston cannot return to Nashville. We must again pierce his center at Savannah or Florence. Buell should move immediately, and not come in too late, as he did at Donelson."

Feeling instinctively that he could get no effective voluntary help from Buell, Halleck turned again to McClellan, informing him of his intended expedition up the Tennessee River; that he had directed a landing to be made at Savannah; that he had sent intrenching tools, and would push forward reënforcements as rapidly as possible. On the following day, however, reporting the strength of Grant's forces, he said: "You will perceive from this that without Buell's aid I am too weak for operations on the Tennessee." The information received by him during the next twenty-four hours, that Curtis had won a splendid victory at the battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas, made a favorable change in his resources, and he explains his views and intentions to McClellan with more confidence:

Halleck to McClellan, March 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., pp. 24, 25.

Reserves intended to support General Curtis will now be drawn in as rapidly as possible and sent to the Tennessee. I propose going there in a few days. That is now the great strategic line of the Western campaign, and I am surprised that General Buell should hesitate to reënforce me. He was too late at Fort Donelson, as Hunter has been in Arkansas. I am obliged to make my calculations independent of both. Believe me, general, you make a serious mistake in having three independent commands in the West. There never will and never can be any coöperation at the critical moment; all military history proves it. You will regret your decision against me on this point. Your friendship for individuals has influenced your judgment. Be it so. I shall soon fight a great battle on the Tennessee unsupported, as it seems; but if successful, it will settle the campaign in the West.

We may also conclude that another element of the confidence that prompted his language was the intimation lately received from the Secretary of War, who three days before had asked him to state "the limits of a military department that would place all the Western operations you deem expedient under your command." In fact, events in the East as well as in the West were culminating, which rather suddenly ended existing military conditions. The naval battle between the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor*, and the almost simultaneous evacuation of Manassas Junction by the rebel forces in Virginia, broke the long inactivity of the Army of the Potomac. We cannot better illustrate how intently Mr. Lincoln was watching army operations, both in the East and the West, than by quoting his dispatch of March 10 to Buell: "The evidence is very strong that the enemy in front of us here is breaking up and moving off. General McClellan is after him. Some part of the force may be destined to meet you. Look out, and be prepared. I telegraphed Halleck, asking him to assist you if needed."

Stanton to Halleck, March 7, 1862. W. R. Vol. VIII., p. 596.

Lincoln to Buell, March 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 612.

McClellan's aimless march to capture a few scarecrow sentinels and quaker guns in the deserted rebel field-works, which had been his nightmare for half a year, afforded the opportunity for a redistribution of military leaderships, which the winter's experience plainly dictated. Slow and cautious in maturing his decisions, President Lincoln was prompt to announce them when they were once reached. On the 11th of March he issued his War Order No. 3, one of his most far-reaching acts of military authority. It relieved McClellan from the duties of general-in-chief of all the armies, and sent

Lincoln, Order, March 11, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., pp. 28, 29.

CH. XVIII. him to the field charged with the single object of conducting the campaign against Richmond. This made possible a new combination for the West, and the same order united the three Western departments (as far East as Knoxville, Tennessee) under the command of Halleck. Under this arrangement was fought the great battle on the Tennessee that Halleck predicted, giving the Union arms a victory the decisive influence of which was felt throughout the remainder of the war; a success, however, due mainly to the gallantry of the troops, and not to any genius or brilliant generalship of Halleck or his subordinate commanders.

1862. The Tennessee River expedition under Smith, which started on March 10, made good its landing at Savannah, and on the 14th Smith sent Sherman with a division on nineteen steamboats, preceded by gunboats, to ascend the river towards Eastport and begin the work of destroying railroad communications, which had been the original object of the whole movement. Sherman made a landing to carry out his orders; but this was the season of spring freshets — a storm of rain and snow changed every ravine and rivulet to a torrent; the Tennessee River rose fifteen feet in twenty-four hours, covering most steamboat landings with deep water; and the intended raid by land and water was reduced to a mere river reconnaissance, which proved the enemy to be in considerable force about Iuka and Corinth, covering and guarding the important railroad crossings and communications. Sherman felt himself compelled to return to Pittsburg Landing, on the west bank of the Tennessee, nine miles above Savannah, which was on the east bank. The

place was already well-known to both armies, for a skirmish had occurred there on the 1st of March between Union gunboats and a rebel regiment.

It would seem that General Smith had fixed upon Pittsburg Landing as an available point from which to operate more at leisure upon the enemy's railroad communications, and hence had sent Hurlbut's division thither, which Sherman found there on his return. The place was not selected as a battlefield, nor as a base of operations for a campaign, but merely to afford a temporary lodgment for raids upon the railroads. By a silent and gradual change of conditions, however, the intention and essential features of the whole Tennessee River movement underwent a transformation. What was begun as a provisional expedition became a strategic central campaign; and what was chosen for an outpost of detachments was almost imperceptibly turned into a principal point of concentration, and became, by the unexpected assault of the enemy, one of the hardest-fought battlefields of the whole war.

Halleck assumed command of his combined departments by general orders dated March 13, and after explaining once more to Buell that all his available force not required to defend Nashville should be sent up the Tennessee, he telegraphed him on the 16th of March: "Move your forces by land to the Tennessee as rapidly as possible. . . Grant's army is concentrating at Savannah. You must direct your march on that point so that the enemy cannot get between us."

W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 613.

Halleck to Buell, March 16, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 42.

The combined campaign thus set in motion was wise in conception, but its preliminary execution

CH. XVIII. proved lamentably weak; and the blame is justly attributable, in about equal measure, to Halleck, Buell, and Grant. For a few days Halleck's orders were decided and firm; then there followed a slackening of opinion and a variance of direction that came near making a disastrous wreck of the whole enterprise. His positive orders to Buell to move as rapidly as possible and to concentrate at Savannah were twice repeated on the 17th; but on the 26th he directed him to concentrate at Savannah or Eastport, and on the 29th to concentrate at Savannah or Pittsburg, while on April 5 he pointedly consented to a concentration at Waynesborough. This was inexcusable uncertainty in the combinations of a great strategist, who complained that "hesitation and delay are losing us the golden opportunity." These were not the firm strides of a leader who promised to "split secession in twain in one month."

It can hardly be claimed that Buell's march fulfilled the injunction to move "as rapidly as possible." When his advanced division reached Duck River at Columbia on the 18th it found that stream swollen and the bridge destroyed, and set itself to the task of building a new frame bridge with a deliberateness better befitting the leisure of peace than the pressing hurry of war. Buell arrived in person at Columbia on the 26th. He manifested his own dissatisfaction with the delay by ordering the construction of another bridge, this time of pontoons, which was completed simultaneously with the first on March 30. Still further delay was projected by a proposition to halt for concentration at Waynesborough. It must be said in justice to

Buell to Halleck, March 27, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 70.

Buell, that Halleck did not complain of the slow bridge-building at Columbia, and that he consented to the concentration at Waynesborough. Had it taken place, Buell's army would again have been "too late" for a great battle. The excuse offered, that Buell supposed the Union army to be safe on the east bank of the Tennessee at Savannah, can scarcely be admitted; for on the 23d Buell received a letter from Grant which said: "I am massing troops at Pittsburg, Tennessee. There is every reason to suppose that the rebels have a large force at Corinth, Mississippi, and at many other points on the road towards Decatur." The bridges over Duck River were finished on the 30th. Meanwhile, General William Nelson had obtained permission to ford the now falling stream with his division in order to "have the advance and get the glory." Since Halleck's dispatches had by this time lost their tone of urgency, and their definiteness of direction, Buell's army pursued its moderate march; Nelson's advance division reaching Savannah on the 5th of April, and others on the 6th.

Grant to Buell, March 19, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 47.

Ammen, Diary, March 27, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part I., pp. 329, 330.

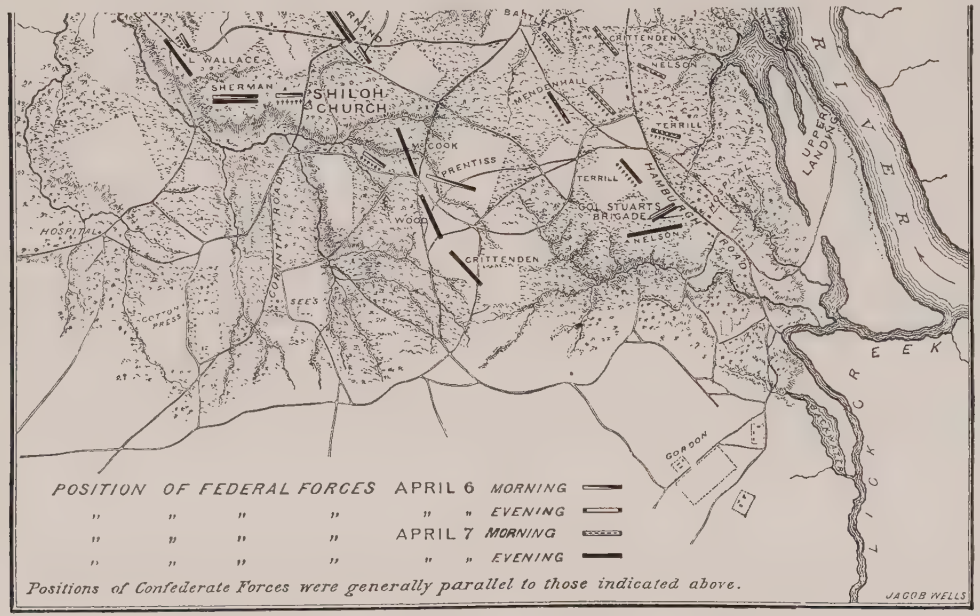
It reflects no credit on General Halleck or General Grant that, during the interim of Buell's march, the advanced post of Pittsburg Landing had been left in serious peril. Halleck was busy at St. Louis collecting reënforcements to send to Grant, with the announced intention to proceed to the field and take personal command on the Tennessee River. This implied a delay demanding either the concentration of the whole army at Savannah, as originally ordered by him, behind the safe barrier of the Tennessee, or strong fortifications for the exposed position of Pittsburg Landing, on the west

CH. XVIII. bank. On the other hand, Grant, resuming his general command in person on March 17, and finding his five divisions separated, three at Savannah and two at Pittsburg Landing,—nine miles apart, with a river between them,—properly took alarm and immediately united them; but in doing this he committed the evident fault of defying danger by choosing the advanced position and of neglecting to raise the slightest intrenchments to protect his troops — which were without means of rapid retreat — against a possible assault from an enemy only twenty miles distant, and according to his own reports at all times his equal if not his superior in numbers. Indeed, in one of his dispatches he reports the numbers of the enemy at 80,000, a force at least double his own. But one cause can be assigned for this palpable imprudence. Well instructed in the duties of an officer under orders, he was just beginning his higher education as a leader of armies, and he was about to receive the most impressive lesson of his life.

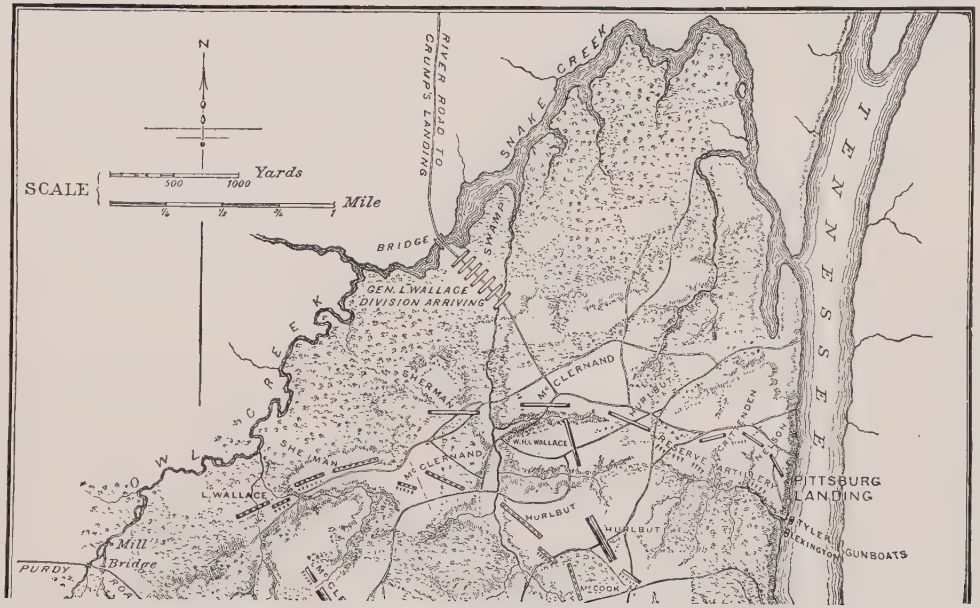
Grant to Halleck, April 5, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 94.

It has been already stated that after the fall of Fort Donelson the rebel commanders fled southward in confusion and dismay. We have the high authority and calm judgment of General Grant, in the mature experience and reflection of after years, that "if one general who would have taken the responsibility had been in command of all the troops west of the Alleghanies, he could have marched to Chattanooga, Corinth, Memphis, and Vicksburg with the troops we then had"; but the secessionists of the Southwest recovered rapidly from the stupefaction of unexpected disaster. In the delay of four or five weeks that the

Grant, "Personal Memoirs." Vol. I., p. 317.



THE OFFICIAL, OR THOM, MAP OF THE BATTLE OF SHILOH.


N
SCALE
500
1000
Yards
Mile
RIVER ROAD TO CRUMP'S LANDING
SNAKE CREEK
SWAMP
BRIDGE
GEN. L. WALLACE DIVISION ARRIVING
OWL CREEK
SHERMAN
McCLERNAND
HURLBUT
W.H.L. WALLACE
RESERVE ARTILLERY
CRITTENDEN
NELSON
PITTSBURG LANDING
TENNESSEE
L. WALLACE
Mill Bridge
PURDY
McCOOK
TYLER
LEXINGTON
GUNBOATS

divided ambition and over-cautious hesitation of the Union generals afforded them, they had renewed their courage, and united and reënforced their scattered armies. The separation of the armies of Johnston from those of Beauregard, which seemed irreparable when the Tennessee River was opened, had not been maintained by the prompt advance that everybody pointed out, but which nobody executed. By the 23d of March the two Confederate generals had, without opposition, effected a junction of their forces at and about Corinth, and thus reversed the pending military problem. In the last weeks of February it could have been the united Unionists pursuing the divided Confederates. In the last weeks of March it was the united Confederates preparing to attack the divided armies of Halleck and Buell. The whole situation and plan is summed up in the dispatch of General Albert Sidney Johnston to Jefferson Davis, dated April 3, 1862: "General Buell is in motion, 30,000 strong, rapidly from Columbia by Clifton to Savannah; Mitchel behind him with 10,000. Confederate forces, 40,000, ordered forward to offer battle near Pittsburg. Division from Bethel, main body from Corinth, reserve from Burnsville converge to-morrow near Monterey on Pittsburg. Beauregard second in command; Polk, left; Hardee, center; Bragg, right wing; Breckinridge, reserve. Hope engagement before Buell can form junction."

Johnston to Davis, April 3, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 387.

The Confederate march took place as projected, and on the evening of April 5 their joint forces went into bivouac two miles from the Union camps. That evening the Confederate commanders held

CH. XVIII. an informal conference. Beauregard became impressed with impending defeat; their march had been slow, the rations they carried were exhausted, and their extra rations and ammunition were not yet at hand. They could no longer hope to effect the complete surprise that was an essential feature of their plan. Beauregard advised a change of programme — to abandon the projected attack and convert the movement into a "reconnaissance in force." General Johnston listened, but refused his assent, and orders were given to begin the battle next morning. No suspicion of such a march or attack entered the mind of any Union officer; and that same day Grant reported to Halleck, "The main force of the enemy is at Corinth."

Grant to Halleck, April 5, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 94.

The natural position occupied by the Union forces is admitted to have been unusually strong. The Tennessee River here runs nearly north. North of the camps, Snake Creek with an affluent, Owl Creek, formed a barrier stretching from the river bank in general direction towards the southwest. South of the camps, Lick Creek and river sloughs also formed an impassable obstruction for a considerable distance next to the Tennessee. The river on the east, and Snake and Owl creeks on the west, thus inclosed a high triangular plateau with sides three or four miles in length, crossed and intersected to some extent by smaller streams and ravines, though generally open towards the south. The roads from Pittsburg Landing towards Corinth followed the main ridge, also towards the southwest. A network of other roads, very irregular in direction, ran from the Corinth roads to various points in the neighborhood. Alternate patches of timber,

thick undergrowth, and open fields covered the locality. Over two miles in a straight line, or nearly three by the roads, southwest from Pittsburg Landing, stood a log meeting-house, called Shiloh Church, which was destined to give its name to the conflict. CH. XVIII.

Five of Grant's divisions were camped on this triangular plateau, not with any view of defense against an attack, but mainly with reference to convenience while there, and for a later movement upon Corinth. An advance line about three miles long between Lick Creek and Owl Creek, if by courtesy we call it a line, was only partly occupied, and none of the regiments on this front had ever been under fire. Three brigades of Brigadier-General W. T. Sherman's division filled, in a desultory way, the space from Owl Creek bridge to a point some distance beyond Shiloh Church. South and eastward near half a mile rested the right of Brigadier-General B. M. Prentiss's division of seven regiments, entirely raw, only recently arrived, more recently armed, and one without ammunition. To the left and rear of this embryo division there was another large interval of nearly a mile where was Colonel David Stuart's brigade of three regiments. It belonged to Sherman's division, but had at the time of landing been thus located upon the Hamburg road, two miles away from its division commander, to watch the fords in that quarter; at the time of the battle it formed the extreme left of the army. Between this front line and Pittsburg Landing were camped two other divisions: Major-General John A. McClernand's from a half to three-quarters of a mile in the rear of the right center, and that

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of Brigadier-General S. A. Hurlbut about one mile in rear of the left center. In the rear of all these, and north of the road which ran due west from the Landing, was Smith's division, then commanded by Brigadier-General W. H. L. Wallace. In these divisions were many of the veterans of Belmont and Donelson, and they were the only ones upon the field who had stood the test of battle. Still another division, under General Lew. Wallace, had been left at Crump's Landing, six miles to the north, as a guard against rebel raids, which threatened to gain possession of the banks of the Tennessee at that point to destroy the river communications. Grant had apprehensions of a raid of this character and cautioned his officers against it, causing such vigilance as had existed for several days.

Grant to Sherman, April 4, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 91.

Most of the particulars of the battle that followed will probably always form a subject of dispute. There were no combined or dramatic movements of masses that can be analyzed and located. The Union army had no prepared line of defense; three lines in which the rebel army had been arranged for the attack became quickly broken and mingled with one another. On the Union side the wide gaps between the camps, their irregular alignment, and the rapidity of the attack compelled the formation of whatever line of battle could be most hurriedly improvised by each separate corps or detachment. General Force says: "A combat made up of numberless separate encounters of detached portions of broken lines, continually shifting position and changing direction in the forest and across ravines, filling an entire day, is almost incapable of a connected narrative."

M. F. Force, "From Fort Henry to Corinth," p. 124.

At five o'clock in the morning of Sunday, April 6, 1862, the rebel lines moved forward to the attack. The time required to pass the intervening two miles, and the preliminary skirmishes with Union pickets and a reconnoitering Union regiment that began the fight, gradually put the whole Union front on the alert; and when the main lines closed with each other, the divisions of Prentiss and Sherman were sufficiently in position to offer a stubborn resistance, and thus enabled reënforcements to come to their support from the other divisions. The Confederates found themselves foiled in the easy surprise and confusion that they had counted upon. It would be a tedious waste of time to attempt to follow the details of the fight, which, begun before sunrise, continued till near sunset. CH. XVIII.

Along the labyrinth of the local roads, over the mixed patchwork of woods, open fields, and almost impenetrable thickets, across stretches of level, broken by miry hollows and abrupt ravines, the swinging lines of conflict moved intermittently throughout the entire day. There was onset and repulse, yell of assault and cheer of defiance, screeching of shells and sputtering of volleys, advance and retreat. But steadily through the fluctuating changes the general progress was northward, the rebels gaining and pushing their advance, the Unionists stubbornly resisting, but little by little losing ground. It was like the flux and reflux of ocean breakers, dashing themselves with tireless repetition against a yielding, crumbling shore. Beauregard, to whom the Confederate commander on going to the front had committed the duties of general headquarters, advanced with the general

CH. XVIII. staff to Shiloh Church, near which stood General Sherman's headquarters' tent. The time consumed and the lists of dead and wounded are sufficient evidence of the brave conduct of officers and the gallant courage of men on both sides. On the Union side the divisions of Hurlbut and W. H. L. Wallace had early been brought forward to sustain those of Sherman, McClernand, and Prentiss. It was, to a degree seldom witnessed in a battle, the slow and sustained struggle, through an entire day, of one whole army against another whole army. The five Union divisions engaged in the battle of Sunday numbered 33,000.[1] The total force of the Confederates attacking them was 40,000.

It was in the afternoon that the more noteworthy incidents of the contest took place. The first of these was the death of the Confederate commander, General Albert Sidney Johnston, who fell in front
Apl. 6, 1862. of Hurlbut between two and three o'clock, while personally leading the charge of a brigade. The knowledge of the loss was carefully kept from the Confederate army, and the headquarters management on their side of the conflict was not therefore

[1] Throughout the history of the War of the Rebellion there is a marked disagreement in the estimates of numbers engaged in battles, as stated by the Unionists on one side and the Confederates on the other. This variance comes from a different manner of reporting those "present for duty" in the two armies, out of which arises a systematic diminution of Confederates and increase of Federals in the statements of Confederate writers. General Force, in his admirable little book, "From Fort Henry to Corinth," analyzes these methods of computation as applied to the battle of Shiloh, and arrives at the conclusion that the actual number of "combatants engaged in the battle" of Sunday was fully 40,000 Confederates and between 32,000 and 33,000 Unionists.

Force, "From Fort Henry to Corinth," pp. 179, 180.

"The reënforcements of Monday numbered, of Buell's army, about 20,000; Lew. Wallace's, 6500; and other regiments, about 1400."

impaired, because Beauregard had been mainly intrusted with it from the beginning. It has been mentioned that Stuart's brigade of three regiments was posted at the extreme left of the Union front; and although its right regiment quickly became demoralized and disappeared, the remaining two, not being as yet hard pressed, had, with some change of position towards the rear, held their place till about noon. From that time until two o'clock they bravely maintained their ground against sharp attacks from superior forces. After severe loss they were also driven back, but their gallant resistance materially retarded the enemy's advance next to the Tennessee River. About five o'clock in the afternoon a serious loss fell upon the Unionists. General Prentiss, commanding the Sixth Division, and General W. H. L. Wallace, commanding the Second Division, whose united lines had held one of the key-points of the Federal left center against numerous and well-concentrated assaults of the enemy, found that the withdrawal of troops both on the right and the left produced gaps that offered openings to the enemy. Prentiss had been instructed by General Grant to hold his position at all hazards, and consulting with Wallace they determined to obey the order notwithstanding the now dangerous exposure; but the enemy seizing the advantage, they quickly found themselves enveloped and surrounded; only portions of their command succeeded in cutting their way out; Wallace was mortally wounded, and Prentiss and fragments of the two divisions, numbering 2200 men, were taken prisoner.

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This wholesale capture left a wide opening in the left of the Federal lines, and probably would have

CH. XVIII. given the victory to the rebels but for another circumstance which somewhat compensated for so abrupt a diminution of the Union forces. The Union lines had now been swept back more than a mile and a half, and the rebel attack was approaching the main road, running from Pittsburg Landing along the principal ridge, which here lay nearly at a right angle to the river. Colonel J. D. Webster of General Grant's staff, noting the steady retreat of the Union lines and foreseeing that the advancing attack of the enemy would eventually reach this ridge, busied himself to post a line of artillery—from thirty-five to fifty guns—along the crest, gathering whatever was available, among which were several siege pieces. To man and support this extemporized battery he organized and posted, in conjunction with Hurlbut's division, such fragments of troops as had become useless at the front. To reach the crest of this ridge and this line of hastily planted cannon the enemy was obliged to cross a deep, broad hollow, extending to the river and partly filled with back-water. The topography of the place was such that the gunboats *Tyler* and *Lexington* were also stationed in the Tennessee, abreast the valley and sheet of back-water, and their guns were thus enabled to assist the line of cannon on the ridge by a cross-fire of shells.

General Grant had passed the night of April 5 at Savannah, where he had become aware of the arrival of the advance brigades of Nelson's division of Buell's army on the same day. He started by boat to Pittsburg Landing early Sunday morning, April 6, having heard the firing but not regarding it as an attack in force. Arrived there he became

a witness of the serious nature of the attack, and remained on the battlefield, visiting the various division commanders and giving such orders as the broken and fluctuating course of the conflict suggested. But the defense, begun in uncertainty and haste before his arrival, could not thereafter be reduced to any order or system; it necessarily, all day long, merely followed the changes and the violence of the rebel attack. The blind and intricate battlefield offered little chance for careful planning; the haste and tumult of combat left no time for tactics. On neither side could the guidance of general command render the usual service; it was the division, brigade, and regimental commanders who fought the battle. About noon of Sunday, General Grant began to have misgivings of the result, and dispatched a letter for help to Buell's forces at Savannah, saying, "If you will get upon the field, leaving all your baggage on the east bank of the river, it will be a move to our advantage, and possibly save the day to us." He also sent an order to General Lew. Wallace, at Crump's Landing, to hasten his division to the right of the army.

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So far as the Confederates had any distinct plan of battle, it was merely the simple one of forcing the Federals away from the river to gain possession of Pittsburg Landing, cut off their means of retreat by seizing or destroying the transports, and compel Grant to capitulate. But the execution of this leading design was completely frustrated by the difficult nature of the ground and the gallant resistance of the Federal left. The principal advance made by the rebels was not next to the river, where they desired it, but on the Union right

CH. XVIII. next to Owl Creek, where it was of least value. Even after they had captured the whole residue of Prentiss's and Wallace's divisions, and had cleared out that terrible center of the Union fire which they had ineffectually assaulted a dozen times, and which by bitter experience they themselves learned to know and designate as the "Hornets' nest," and near which their commander had fallen in death, they were not yet within reach of the coveted banks of Pittsburg Landing. Before them was still a line of steep hills, separated from them by the broad valley, the back-water, the mire, across which screeched the shells from the gunboats and from the long death-threatening line of Webster's reserve artillery, behind which the bayonets of Hurlbut's division, yet solid in organization and strong in numbers, glinted in the evening sun. From Hurlbut's right the shattered but courageous remnants of the divisions of McClernand and Sherman stretched away in an unbroken line towards Owl Creek. Ground had been lost and ground had been won; the line of fire had moved a mile and a half to the north; the lines of combatants had been shortened from three miles in the morning to one mile in the evening; but now, after the day's conflict, when the sun approached his setting, the relations and the prospects of the bloody fight were but little changed. The Confederates held the field of battle, but the Unionists held their central position, their supplies, and their communications. The front of attack had become as weak as the front of defense. On each side from eight to ten thousand men had been lost, by death, wounds, and capture. From ten to fifteen thousand panic-stricken Union strag-

glers cowered under the shelter of the high river bank at Pittsburg Landing. From ten to fifteen thousand Confederate stragglers, some equally panic-stricken, others demoralized by the irresistible temptations of camp-pillage, encumbered the rear of Beauregard's army. The day was nearly gone and the battle was undecided.

A controversy has recently arisen as to the personal impressions and intentions of General Grant at this crisis. His "Memoirs" declare in substance that he was still so confident of victory that he gave orders that evening for a renewal of the fight on the following morning by a general attack. General Buell, on the other hand, makes a strong argument that the evidence is against this assumption. It is possible, as in so many other cases, that the truth lies midway between the two statements. A famous newspaper correspondent, who was on the battlefield, made the following record of the affair long before this controversy arose: "The tremendous roar to the left, momentarily nearer and nearer, told of an effort to cut him off from the river and from retreat. Grant sat his horse, quiet, thoughtful, almost stolid. Said one to him, 'Does not the prospect begin to look gloomy?' 'Not at all,' was the quiet reply. 'They can't force our lines around these batteries to-night — it is too late. Delay counts everything with us. To-morrow we shall attack them with fresh troops and drive them, of course.'" The correspondent adds, in a note: "I was myself a listener to this conversation, and from it I date, in my own case at least, the beginning of any belief in Grant's greatness." As this writer was one of

Buell, in "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War." Vol. I., p. 523 *et seq.*

Whitelaw Reid, "Ohio in the Civil War." Vol. I., p. 375.

CH. XVIII. Grant's most candid critics, his testimony on this point is all the more valuable.

The turning-point was at length reached. Whatever may have been the much-disputed intentions and hopes of commanders at that critical juncture that were not expressed and recorded, or what might have been the possibilities and consequence of acts that were not attempted, it is worse than useless to discuss upon hypothesis. Each reader for himself must interpret the significance of the

Apl. 6, 1862. three closing incidents of that momentous Sunday, which occurred almost simultaneously. Some of the rebel division commanders, believing that victory would be insured by one more desperate assault against the Union left to gain possession of Pittsburg Landing, made arrangements and gave orders for that object. It seems uncertain, however, whether the force could have been gathered and the movement made in any event. Only a single brigade made the attempt, and it was driven back in confusion. The officer of another detachment refused the desperate service. Still others were overtaken in their preparation by orders from General Beauregard to withdraw the whole Confederate army from the fight, and to go into bivouac until the following day. Eager as was that commander for victory, the conclusion had been forced on his mind, that, for that day at least, it was not within the power of his army to complete their undertaking; and accordingly he directed that the fight should cease. He reached this determination not knowing that Buell had arrived, and still hoping that he would not arrive even on the morrow.

In this hope Beauregard was disappointed. While yet his orders to retire from the combat were being executed, and before the last desperate charge of the rebels towards Webster's reserve artillery was beaten back, the vanguard of Nelson's division, which had marched from Savannah and had been ferried across the river by transports, was mounting the bank at Pittsburg Landing and deploying in line of battle under the enemy's fire, Colonel Jacob Ammen's fresh brigade first coming to the support of the line of Union guns. A few men out of the brigade fell by the rebel bullets, and then came twilight, and soon after the darkness of night. The tide of victory was effectually turned. Whatever the single army of Grant might or might not have accomplished on the following day against the army of Beauregard is only speculation. Beauregard's attack had been ordered discontinued before the actual presence of Buell's troops on the battlefield. Had the attack been continued, however, that opportune arrival would have rendered its success impossible. CH. XVIII. Apl. 6, 1862.

After sunset of Sunday all chances of a rebel victory vanished. The remainder of Nelson's division immediately crossed the river and followed Ammen's brigade to the field. Brigadier-General T. L. Crittenden's division was next placed in position during the night. Finally Brigadier-General A. McD. McCook's division reached Pittsburg Landing early Monday morning and promptly advanced to the front. General Buell, who had come before the vanguard on Sunday, in person directed the placing and preparation of these three superb divisions of his army — a total of about twenty

CH. XVIII. thousand fresh, well-equipped, and well-drilled troops — to renew an offensive conflict along the left of the Federal line. On the Federal right was stationed the fresh division of General Lew. Wallace, numbering 5000, which had arrived from Crump's Landing a little after nightfall, and which took position soon after midnight of Sunday. Along the Federal right center, Grant's reduced divisions which had fought the battle of Sunday were gathered and reorganized, McClernand and Sherman in front, Hurlbut and remnants of W. H. L. Wallace's division, with some new detachments, in reserve.

Grant and Buell met on Sunday evening and agreed to take the offensive jointly on Monday morning; Buell to command his three divisions on the left, Grant to direct his own forces on the right. No special plan was adopted other than simultaneously to drive the enemy from the field. The plan
Apl. 7, 1862. was carried out in harmony and with entire success. With only temporary checks, brought about by the too great impetuosity of the newly arrived reënforcements, the two wings of the Union army advanced steadily, and by three o'clock in the afternoon were in possession of all the ground from which they had been driven on the previous day; while the rebel army was in full retreat upon Corinth —foiled of its victory, dejected in spirit, and in a broken and almost hopeless state of disorganization. A little more genius and daring on the part of the Union commanders would have enabled them by vigorous pursuit to demolish or capture it; but they chose the more prudent alternative, and remained satisfied with only sufficient advance to assure themselves that the enemy had disappeared.

The statement of the Union losses at the battle of Shiloh, which has been compiled from official reports, is as follows: In the army of Grant, 1513 killed; 6601 wounded; and 2830 captured or missing. In the army of Buell, 241 killed; 1807 wounded; and 55 captured or missing.

W. R. Vol. X., Part I., pp. 105, 108, 396.

The Confederate loss is stated to have been 1728 killed; 8012 wounded; and 959 missing.

CHAPTER XIX

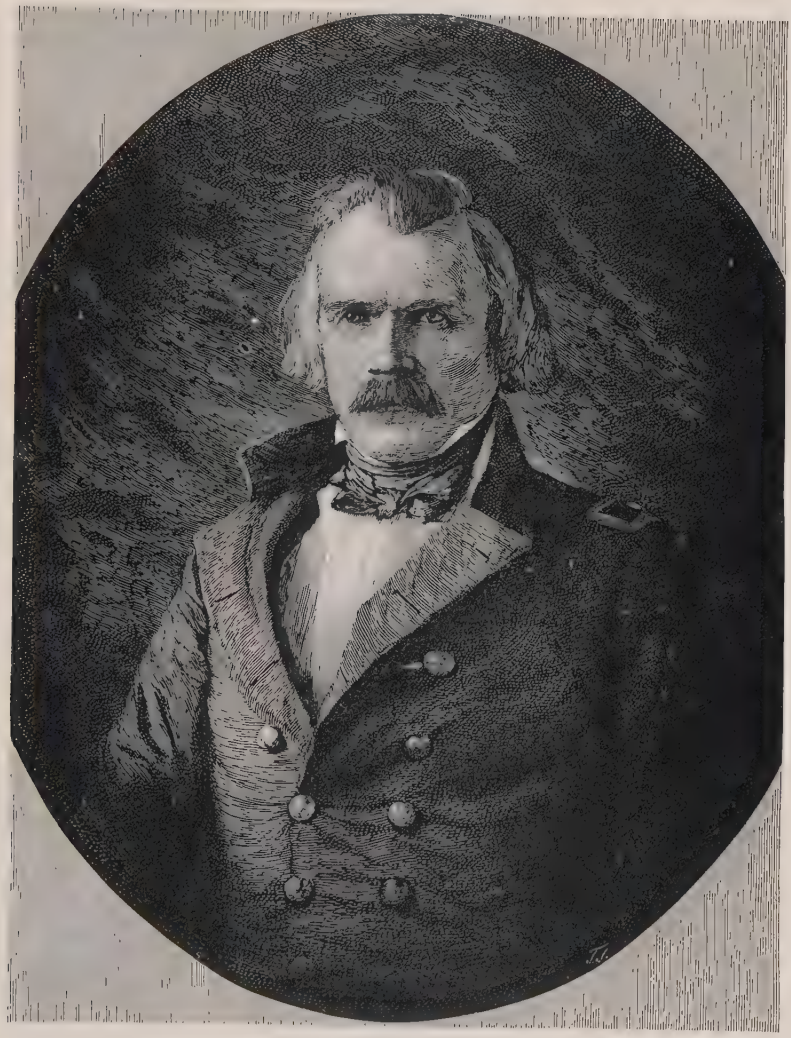
HALLECK'S CORINTH CAMPAIGN

CHAP. XIX.

ON Wednesday, April 9, two days after the battle of Shiloh, General Grant gave evidence that he had fully learned the severe lesson of that terrible encounter. Reporting to Halleck his information that the enemy was again concentrating all his forces at Corinth, he added: "I do not like to suggest, but it appears to me that it would be demoralizing upon our troops here to be forced to retire upon the opposite bank of the river, and unsafe to remain on this many weeks without large reënforcements."

Grant to Halleck, April 9, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., pp. 99, 100.

Halleck's opinion probably coincided with that of Grant, and the fortunes of war enabled him immediately to fulfill his promise to come to his relief. The day which saw the conclusion of the fight at Shiloh (April 7, 1862) witnessed the surrender of the rebel works at Island No. 10, on the Mississippi River, and the quick capture of nearly their entire garrison of 6000 or 7000 men. This finished the task which General Pope had been sent to do, and enabled Halleck to transfer him and his army, by water, from the Mississippi River to the Tennessee. Halleck's order



GENERAL ALBERT SIDNEY JOHNSTON AT THE AGE OF FIFTY-SEVEN.

was made on April 15, and on the 22d Pope landed at Hamburg, four miles above the battlefield of Shiloh, with his compact force of 20,000 men fully organized and equipped, and flushed with a signal victory. Halleck had arrived before him. Reaching Pittsburg Landing on the 11th of April, he began with industry to cure the disorders produced by the recent battle. Critics who still accuse the Lincoln Administration of ignorant meddling with military affairs are invited to remember the language of the Secretary of War to Halleck on this occasion: "I have no instructions to give you. Go ahead, and all success attend you."

Stanton to Halleck, April 9, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 99.

The arrival of Pope was utilized by Halleck to give his united command an easy and immediate organization into army corps. His special field orders of April 28 named the Army of the Tennessee the First Army Corps, commanded by Grant, and constituting the right wing; the Army of the Ohio the Second Army Corps, commanded by Buell, and constituting the center; and the newly arrived Army of the Mississippi the Third Army Corps, commanded by Pope, and forming the left wing. Two days later (April 30) another order gave command of the right wing to General Thomas, whose division of the Army of the Ohio was added to it; it also organized a reserve corps under General McClernand, and had this provision: "Major-General Grant will retain the general command of the District of West Tennessee, including the Army Corps of the Tennessee, and reports will be made to him as heretofore; but in the present movements he will act as second in command under the major-general commanding the department."

Halleck, Orders, April 28, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 138.

Halleck, Orders, April 30, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., p. 144.

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The exact intent of this assignment remains to this day a matter of doubt. Nominally, it advanced Grant in rank and authority; practically, it deprived him of active and important duty. Halleck being on the field in person issued his orders directly to the corps commanders and received reports from them, and for about two months Grant found himself without serious occupation. The position became so irksome that he several times asked to be relieved, but Halleck refused; though he finally allowed him to go for a season into a species of honorable retirement, by removing his headquarters from the camp of the main army.

Coming to the front so soon after the great battle, Halleck seems to have been impressed with the seriousness of the conflict, for all his preparations to assume the offensive were made with the most deliberate caution. It was manifest that the enemy intended to defend Corinth, and necessarily that place became his first objective. With all the efforts that the Confederate Government could make, however, Beauregard succeeded in bringing together only about 50,000 effective troops. Halleck's combined armies contained more than double that number; but such was his fear of another surprise, or a sudden disaster, that his advance upon Corinth was not like an invading march, but like the investment of a fortress. An army carrying 100,000 bayonets, in the picturesque language of General Sherman, moved upon Corinth "with pick and shovel." Intrenching, bridge-building, road-making, were the order of the day. Former carelessness and temerity were succeeded by a fettering over-caution.

Sherman to Halleck, July 8, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVII., Part II., p. 83.

CHAP. XIX.

The Administration expected more energetic campaigning from a commander of Halleck's reputed skill and the brilliant results realized since his advent. The country seemed at the culmination of great events. Since the beginning of the year success had smiled almost continuously upon the Union cause. As the crowning inspiration, in the midst of his march there had come the joyful news of Farragut's triumph and the capture of New Orleans. "Troops cannot be detached from here on the eve of a great battle," telegraphed Halleck to Stanton. "We are now at the enemy's throat." To such encouraging assurances the Administration responded with every possible exertion of reënforcement and supply. But days succeeded days, and the President's hope remained deferred. Nearly a month later, when reports came that Halleck was awaiting the arrival of a fourth Union army,—that of Curtis from Arkansas,—and these reports were supplemented by intimations that he would like to be joined by a fifth army from somewhere else, Mr. Lincoln sent him a letter of such kindly explanation, that, in the actual condition of things, every word was a stinging rebuke:

Halleck to Stanton, April 26, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., pp. 128, 129.

"Several dispatches from Assistant Secretary Scott, and one from Governor Morton, asking reënforcements for you, have been received. I beg you to be assured we do the best we can. I mean to cast no blame when I tell you each of our commanders along our line from Richmond to Corinth supposes himself to be confronted by numbers superior to his own. Under this pressure we thinned the line on the upper Potomac, until yesterday it was broken at heavy loss to us and General Banks

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put in great peril, out of which he is not yet extricated and may be actually captured. We need men to repair this breach, and have them not at hand. My dear general, I feel justified to rely very much on you. I believe you and the brave officers and men with you can and will get the victory at Corinth." In reply Halleck resorted to the usual expedient of reading the Secretary of War a military lecture. May 25 he wrote: "Permit me to remark that we are operating upon too many points. Richmond and Corinth are now the great strategical points of war, and our success at these points should be insured at all hazards."

Lincoln to Halleck, May 24, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part I., pp. 666, 667.

Halleck to Stanton, May 25, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part I., p. 667.

His herculean effort expended itself without corresponding result, when, a week later, he marched into the empty intrenchments of Corinth, only to find that the fifty thousand men composing Beauregard's army — the vital strength of rebellion in the West — were retreating at leisure to Baldwin and Okolona, railroad towns some fifty miles to the south. It had required but two days for the rebel army to go from Corinth to the Shiloh battlefield. Halleck consumed thirty-seven days to pass over the same distance and the same ground, with an army twice as strong as that of his adversary. Pope had reached him April 22, and it was the 29th of May when the Union army was within assaulting distance of the rebel intrenchments. The campaign had advanced with scientific precision, and attained one object for which it was conducted: it gained the fortifications of Corinth. In the end, however, it proved to be but the shell of the expected victory. Beauregard had not only skillfully disputed the advance and de-

ceived his antagonist, but at the critical moment had successfully withdrawn the rebel forces to wage more equal conflict on other fields. The enemy evacuated Corinth on the night of the 29th, and beyond the usual demoralization which attends such a retrograde movement suffered little, for Halleck ordered only pursuit enough to drive him to a convenient distance. The achievement was the triumph of a strategist, not the success of a general. Instead of seizing his opportunity to win a great battle or to capture an army by siege, he had simply manœuvred the enemy out of position.

CHAP. XIX.

May, 1862.

In reporting his success to Washington, Halleck of course magnified its value to the utmost,[1] and for the moment the Administration, not having that full information which afterwards so seriously diminished the estimate, accepted the report in good faith as a grand Union triumph. It was indeed a considerable measure of success. Besides

[1] "Pope, condensing into one dispatches received from Rosecrans, Hamilton, and Granger, telegraphed to Halleck: 'The two divisions in the advance under Rosecrans are slowly and cautiously advancing on Baldwin this morning, with the cavalry on both flanks. Hamilton with two divisions is at Rienzi and between there and Boonville, ready to move forward should they be needed. One brigade from the reserve occupies Danville. Rosecrans reports this morning that the enemy has retreated from Baldwin, but he is advancing cautiously. The woods, for miles, are full of stragglers from the enemy, who are coming in in squads. Not less than ten thousand men are thus scattered about who will come in within a day or two.' General Halleck dispatched to the War Department: 'General Pope, with 40,000 men, is thirty miles south of Corinth, pushing the enemy hard. He already reports 10,000 prisoners and deserters from the enemy, and 15,000 stands of arms captured.' This dispatch of General Halleck's made a great sensation. The expectation that the stragglers would come into the National camp was disappointed; the prisoners taken were few, and Pope was censured for making a statement of fact which he neither made nor authorized." Force, "From Fort Henry to Corinth," pp. 190, 191.

CHAP. XIX. its valuable moral effect in strengthening the patriotism and confidence of the North, and the secondary military advantage that the combined Western armies gained in the two months' strict camp discipline and active practical instruction in the art of field fortification, there was the positive possession of an important railroad center, and the apparent security of Western and Central Tennessee from rebel occupation.

In addition to these it had one yet more immediate and valuable military result. The remaining rebel strongholds on the upper Mississippi were now so completely turned that they were no longer tenable. Forts Pillow and Randolph were hastily evacuated by the enemy, and the Union flotilla
1862. took possession of their deserted works on June 5. Halleck had been looking somewhat anxiously for help on the river, and had complained of the unwillingness of the gunboats to run past the Fort Pillow batteries and destroy the river fleet of the rebels. Flag-officer Davis had considered the risk too great and had remained above Fort Pillow, occupying his time in harassing the works by a continuous bombardment. Now that the way was opened he immediately advanced in force, and at night of June 5 came to anchor two miles above the city of Memphis. His flotilla had lately received a notable reënforcement. One of the many energetic impulses which Stanton gave to military operations in the first few months after he became Secretary of War was his employment of an engineer of genius and daring, Charles Ellet, Jr., to extemporize a fleet of steam-rams for service on the Western rivers.

The single blow by which the iron prow of the *Merrimac* sunk the *Cumberland*, at the time of the famous sea-fight between the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor*, had demonstrated the effectiveness of this novelty in marine warfare. Ellet's proposal to the Secretary of the Navy, to try it on the Western rivers, was not favorably entertained; probably because the Navy Department already had its officers and its appropriations engaged in other more methodical and permanent naval constructions. But the eager and impatient Secretary of War listened to Ellet's plans with interest, and commissioned him to collect such suitable river craft as he could find on the Ohio, and to convert them post-haste into steam-rams, "the honorable Secretary," reports Ellet, "expressing the hope that not more than twenty days would be consumed in getting them ready for service." Ellet received his orders March 27.[1] On May 25 he joined the flotilla of Davis with a fleet of six vessels, formerly swift and strong river tugs and steamers, but now strengthened and converted for their new and peculiar service, and these accompanied the gunboats in the advance against Memphis. On the morning of June 6 the rebel flotilla of eight gun-

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1862.

1 "In response to that order I selected three of the strongest and swiftest stern-wheel coal tow-boats at Pittsburg, of which the average dimensions are about one hundred and seventy feet length, thirty feet beam, and over five feet hold. At Cincinnati I selected two side-wheel boats, of which the largest is one hundred and eighty feet long, thirty-seven and a half feet beam in the widest part, and eight feet hold. At New Albany I secured a boat of about the same length but rather less beam, and subsequently I selected another at Cincinnati, of about the same class as the last, and sent her to Madison to be fitted out."—Ellet to McGunnigle, April 27, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part II., pp. 621, 622.

CHAP. XIX. boats was discovered in front of the city preparing for fight, and there occurred another of the many dramatic naval combats of the war.

June 6, 1862. The eight rebel gunboats ranged themselves in two lines abreast the city. The hills of Memphis were covered with thousands of spectators. With the dawn five of the Union gunboats began backing down the Mississippi, holding their heads against the strong current to insure easier control and management of the vessels. The steam-rams were yet tied up to the river bank. Soon the rebel flotilla opened fire on the Union gunboats, to which the latter replied with spirit. Four of Ellet's rams, hearing the guns, cast loose to take part in the conflict. One of them disabled her rudder, and another, mistaking her orders, remained out of fighting distance. But the *Queen of the West* and the *Monarch*, passing swiftly between the gunboats, dashed into the rebel line. The gunboats, now turning their heads down the stream, hastily followed. There was a short and quick mêlée of these uncouth-looking river monsters, ram crashing into ram and gunboat firing into gunboat in a confusion of attack and destruction. In twenty minutes four rebel vessels and one Union ram were sunk or disabled. At this the other four rebel vessels turned and fled down-stream, and in a running pursuit of an hour, extending some ten miles, three additional vessels of the enemy were captured or destroyed. The Confederate fleet was almost annihilated; only one of their gunboats escaped. The two disabled Union ships were soon raised and repaired, but the ram fleet had suffered an irreparable loss. Its commander, Ellet, was wounded by a pistol-shot, from

the effect of which he died two weeks later. The combat was witnessed by Jeff. Thompson, commanding the city with a small detachment of rebel troops. In his report of the affair he mentions that "we were hurried in our retirement from Memphis." That afternoon the Union flag floated over the city.

The naval victory of Memphis supplemented and completed the great Tennessee campaign begun by Grant's reconnaissance of January 9. A division of Buell's army under General Mitchel had in the mean while occupied and held the line of the Tennessee River between Tuscumbia and Stevenson; and thus the frontier of rebellion had been pushed down from middle Kentucky below the southern boundary of the State of Tennessee. But the invading movement following the line of the Tennessee River had expended its advantage; the initial point of a new campaign had been reached. We are left in doubt under what conviction Halleck formed his next plans, for he determined to dissolve and scatter the magnificent army of more than one hundred thousand men under his hand and eye; apparently in violation of the very military theory he had formulated two weeks before, when he said, "We are operating on too many points." In a dispatch to the Secretary of War on the 9th of June he announced his purpose to do three distinct things: First, to hold the Memphis and Charleston Railroad; second, to send relief to Curtis in Arkansas; third, to send troops to East Tennessee. To these three he added a fourth purpose in a dispatch of June 12: "If the combined fleet of Farragut and Davis fail to take Vicksburg,

Halleck to Stanton, June 9, 1862. W. R. Vol. X., Part I., p. 671.

CHAP. XIX. I will send an expedition for that purpose as soon as I can reënforce General Curtis."

Halleck to Stanton, June 12, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVI., Part II., p. 14.

Up to this point the country's estimate of General Halleck's military ability had steadily risen, but several serious errors of judgment now arrested his success. The greatest of these errors, perhaps, was the minor importance he seems to have attached to a continuation of the operations on the Mississippi River. We have described the victory of Farragut, and we need now to follow the upward course of his fleet. After receiving the surrender of New Orleans in the last days of April, he promptly pushed an advance section of his ships up the Mississippi, which successively, and without serious opposition, received the surrender of all the important cities below Vicksburg, where Farragut himself arrived on the 20th of May. Vicksburg proved to be the most defensible position on the Mississippi, by reason of the high bluffs at and about the city. The Confederates had placed such faith in their defenses of the upper river, at Columbus, Island No. 10, and Fort Pillow, that no early steps were taken to fortify Vicksburg; but when Farragut passed and captured the lower forts and the upper defenses fell, the rebels made what haste they could to create a formidable barrier to navigation at Vicksburg.

Beauregard sent plans for fortifications while he was yet disputing Halleck's advance from Shiloh to Corinth; and Lovell at New Orleans, retreating before Farragut's invasion, shipped the heavy guns he could no longer keep, and sent five regiments of Confederate troops which he could no longer use, to erect the works. These reached their destination

on May 12, and continuing the labors and preparations already begun, he had six batteries ready for service on Farragut's arrival. Remembering these dates and numbers, we can realize the unfortunate results of Halleck's dilatory Corinth campaign. He had then been in command, for a whole month, of forces double those of his antagonist. If, instead of digging his way from Shiloh to Corinth "with pick and shovel," he had forced such a prompt march and battle as his overwhelming numbers gave him power to do, the inevitable defeat or retreat of his enemy would have enabled him to meet the advance of Farragut with an army detachment sufficient to effect the reduction of Vicksburg with only slight resistance and delay. Such a movement ought to have followed by all the rules of military and political logic. The opening of the Mississippi outranked every other Western military enterprise in importance and urgency. It would have effectually severed four great States from the rebel Confederacy; it would have silenced doubt at home and extinguished smoldering intervention abroad; it would have starved the rebel armies and fed the cotton operatives of Europe. There would have been ample time, for he was advised as early as the 27th of April that New Orleans had been captured and that Farragut had "orders to push up to Memphis immediately," and he ought to have prepared to meet him. CHAP. XIX. 1862.

No such coöperation, however, greeted Farragut. Reaching Vicksburg, his demand for the surrender of the place was refused. The batteries were at such a height that his guns could have no effect against them. Only two regiments of land forces

CHAP. XIX. 1862. accompanied the fleet. There was nothing to be done but to return to New Orleans, which he reached about the 1st of June. Here he met orders from Washington communicating the great desire of the Administration to have the river opened. Farragut took immediate measures to comply with this requirement. But his task had already become more difficult. The enemy quickly comprehended the advantage which the few high bluffs of the Mississippi afforded them, if not to obstruct, at least to harass and damage the operations of a fleet unsupported by land forces. The places which had been surrendered were, on the retirement of the ships, again occupied, and batteries were soon raised, which, though unable to cope with armed vessels, became troublesome and dangerous to transports, and were intermittently used or abandoned as the advantage or necessity of the enemy dictated.

Farragut again reached Vicksburg about June 25, accompanied this time by Porter with sixteen of his mortar-boats, and by General Thomas Williams at the head of three thousand Union troops. The mortar-sloops were placed in position and bombarded the rebel works on the 27th. On the morning of June 28, before daylight, Farragut's ships, with the aid of the continued bombardment, made an attack on the Vicksburg batteries, and most of them succeeded in passing up the river with comparatively small loss. Here he found Ellet — brother of him who was wounded at Memphis — with some vessels of the ram fleet, who carried the news to the gunboat flotilla under Davis yet at Memphis. This flotilla now also descended the river and joined Farragut on the 1st of July.

We have seen, by the dispatch heretofore quoted, that Halleck expected the combined naval and gunboat forces to reduce the Vicksburg defenses, but also that, in the event of their failure, he would send an army to help them. The lapse of two weeks served to modify this intention. The Secretary of War, who had probably received news of Farragut's first failure to pass the Vickburg batteries, telegraphed him on June 23 to examine the project of a canal to cut off Vicksburg, suggested by General Butler and others. Halleck replied (on June 28), "It is impossible to send forces to Vicksburg at present, but I will give the matter very full attention as soon as circumstances will permit." That same day Farragut passed above the batteries, and of this result Halleck was informed by Grant, who was at Memphis. Grant's dispatch added an erroneous item of news concerning the number of troops with Farragut, but more trustworthy information soon reached Halleck in the form of a direct application from Farragut for help. To this appeal Halleck again felt himself obliged to reply in the negative, July 3, 1862: "The scattered and weakened condition of my forces renders it impossible for me, at the present, to detach any troops to coöperate with you on Vicksburg. Probably I shall be able to do so as soon as I can get my troops more concentrated. This may delay the clearing of the river, but its accomplishment will be certain in a few weeks."

Stanton to Halleck, June 23, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVII., Part II., p. 26.

Halleck to Stanton, June 28, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVII., Part II., p. 43.

Halleck to Farragut, July 3, 1862. Report of the Secretary of the Navy.

The hopeful promise with which the telegram closed dwindled away during the eleven days that followed. On the 14th of July Stanton asked him the direct question: "The Secretary of the Navy

CHAP. XIX. desires to know whether you have, or intend to have, any land force to coöperate in the operations at Vicksburg. Please inform me immediately, inasmuch as orders he intends to give will depend on your answer." The answer this time was short and conclusive. "I cannot at present give Commodore Farragut any aid against Vicksburg." A coöperative land force of from 12,000 to 15,000 men, Farragut estimated in his report of June 28, would have been sufficient to take the works. If we compare the great end to be attained with the smallness of the detachment thought necessary, there remains no reasonable explanation why Halleck should not have promptly sent it. But the chance had been lost. The waters of the Mississippi were falling so rapidly that Farragut dared not tarry in the river; and in accordance with orders received from the Department on July 20, he again ran past the Vicksburg batteries and returned to New Orleans.

W. R. Vol. XVII., Part II., p. 97.

1862.

If Halleck's refusal to help Farragut take Vicksburg seems inexplicable, it is yet more difficult to understand the apparently sudden cessation of all his military activity, and his proposal, just at the time when his army had gathered its greatest strength and efficiency, to terminate his main campaign, and, in effect, go into summer quarters. He no longer talked of splitting secession in twain in one month, or of being at the enemy's throat. He no longer pointed out the waste of precious time, and uttered no further complaint about his inability to control Buell's army. His desires had been gratified. He commanded half of the military area within the Union; he had three armies under his own eye; the enemy was in flight before him; he

could throw double numbers of men at any given point. At least two campaigns of overshadowing importance invited his resistless march. But in the midst of his success, in the plenitude of his power, with fortune thrusting opportunity upon him, he came to a sudden halt, folded his contented arms, and imitated the conduct that he wrongfully imputed to Grant after Donelson— "Satisfied with his victory, he sits down and enjoys it without regard to the future." In a long letter to the Secretary of War, dated June 25, after reviewing the sanitary condition of the army and pronouncing it very good, he asked, apparently as the main question, "Can we carry on any summer campaign without having a large portion of our men on the sick-list?" This idea seemed to dominate his thought and to decide his action. Buell had been ordered eastward on a leisurely march towards Chattanooga. Halleck proposed to plant the armies of Grant and of Pope on the healthy uplands of Northern Mississippi and Alabama as mere corps of observation. Having personally wrested Corinth from the enemy, he exaggerated its strategical value. As a terminal point in the southward campaign, along the line of the Tennessee River, its chief use was to aid in opening the Mississippi River by turning the Confederate fortifications from Columbus to Memphis. Those strongholds once in Federal possession, Corinth inevitably fell into a secondary rôle, especially since the summer droughts rendered the Tennessee River useless as a military highway.

Halleck to McClellan, March 3, 1862. W. R. Vol. VII., p. 680.

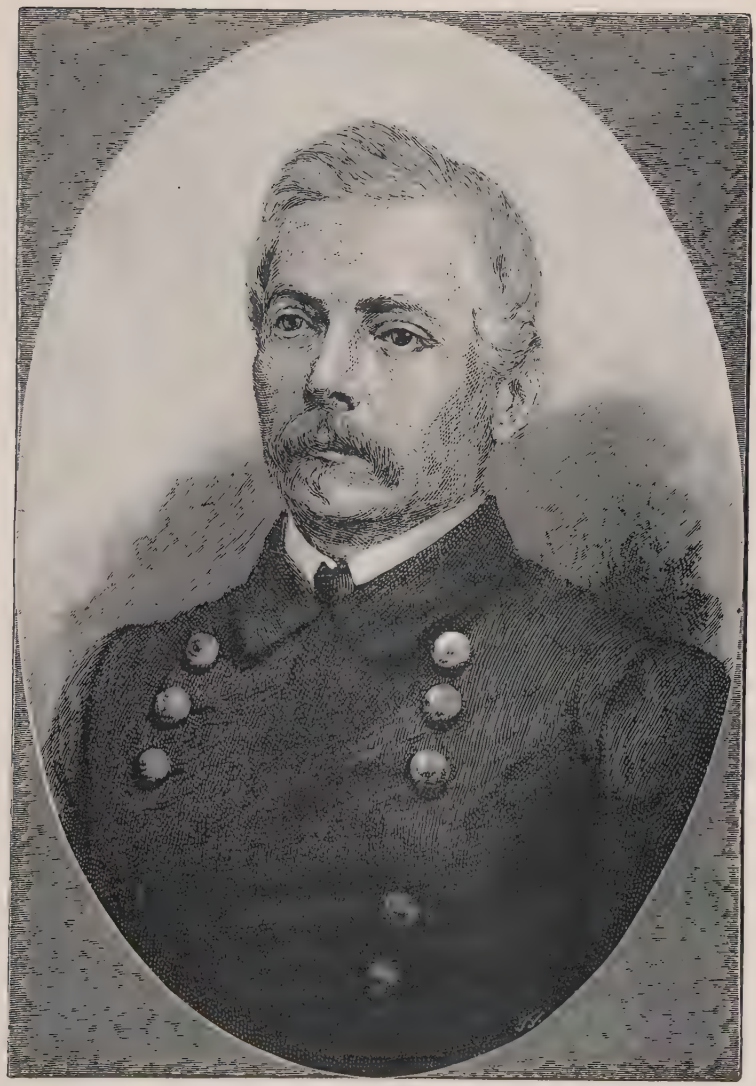
Halleck to Stanton, June 25, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVI., Part II., p. 62.

Carrying out this policy of Halleck, a large portion of the Western armies of the Union wasted

CHAP. XIX. time and strength guarding a great area of rebel territory unimportant for military uses, and which could have been better protected by an active forward movement. The security and the supply of Corinth appears to have been the central purpose. Buell was delayed in his march thoroughly to repair the railroad from Corinth eastward towards Chattanooga. Other detachments of the army were employed to repair the railroads westward from Corinth to Memphis, and northward from Corinth to Columbus. For several months all the energies of the combined armies were diverted from their more useful duty of offensive war to tedious labor on these local railroads;[1] much of the repairs being destroyed, almost as rapidly as performed, by daring guerrilla hostilities, engendered and screened amidst the surrounding sentiment of disloyalty. It is impossible to guess what Halleck's personal supervision in these tasks might have produced, for at this juncture came a culmination of events that transferred him to another field of duty; but the legacy of policy, plans, and orders that he left behind contributed to render the whole Western campaign sterile throughout the second half of 1862.

The unfortunate policy of thus tying up the Western forces in mere defensive inaction comes out in still stronger light in the incident that follows; but it especially serves to show once more

[1] "I inclose herewith a copy of a report of Brigadier-General McPherson, superintendent of railroads, from which it will be seen that we have opened 367 miles of road in less than one month, besides repairing a number of locomotives and cars which were captured from the enemy greatly injured. Indeed, the woodwork of most of the cars has been entirely rebuilt, and all this work has been done by details from the army."—Halleck to Stanton, July 7, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVII., Part II., p. 78.



G. T. Beauregard

how, in the West as well as in the East, President Lincoln treated his military commanders, not with ignorant interference, as has been so often alleged, but with the most fatherly indulgence. Future chapters will describe the complete failure in the East of the campaign undertaken by McClellan against Richmond, and which, on the 30th of June, brought to Halleck an order from the Secretary of War, dated the 28th, immediately to detach and send 25,000 men to assist that imperiled enterprise. The necessity was declared "imperative." "But in detaching your force," explained the order, "the President directs that it be done in such way as to enable you to hold your ground and not interfere with the movement against Chattanooga and East Tennessee." Halleck took instant measures to obey the order, but said in reply that it would jeopardize the ground gained in Tennessee and involve the necessity of abandoning Buell's East Tennessee expedition. This result the President had in advance declared inadmissible. He now telegraphed emphatically on June 30: "Would be very glad of 25,000 infantry—no artillery or cavalry; but please do not send a man if it endangers any place you deem important to hold, or if it forces you to give up or weaken or delay the expedition against Chattanooga. To take and hold the railroad at or east of Cleveland, in East Tennessee, I think fully as important as the taking and holding of Richmond."

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Stanton to Halleck, June 28, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVII., Part II., p. 42.

Lincoln to Halleck, June 30, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVII., Part II., p. 53.

This request, but accompanied by the same caution and condition, was repeated by the President on July 2; and again, under the prompting of extreme need, Lincoln on July 4 sent a diminished

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request; still, however, insisting that no risk be incurred in the West: "You do not know how much you would oblige us if, without abandoning any of your positions or plans, you could promptly send us even ten thousand infantry. Can you not? Some part of the Corinth army is certainly fighting McClellan in front of Richmond. Prisoners are in our hands from the late Corinth army."

Lincoln to Halleck, July 4, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVII., Part. II., p. 70.

In Halleck's response on the following day it is important to notice the difference in the opinions entertained by the two men upon this point. Lincoln wished to gain East Tennessee, Halleck desired to hold West Tennessee. The distinction is essential, for we shall see that while Halleck's policy prevailed, it tended largely, if not principally, to thwart the realization of Lincoln's earnest wish. Halleck telegraphed: "For the last week there has been great uneasiness among Union men in Tennessee on account of the secret organizations of insurgents to coöperate in any attack of the enemy on our lines. Every commanding officer from Nashville to Memphis has asked for reënforcements. Under these circumstances I submitted the question of sending troops to Richmond to the principal officers of my command. They are unanimous in opinion that if this army is seriously diminished the Chattanooga expedition must be revoked or the hope of holding Southwest Tennessee abandoned. I must earnestly protest against surrendering what has cost us so much blood and treasure, and which in a military point of view is worth three Richmonds." He had already, in a previous telegram (July 1), acknowledged and exercised the discretion

Halleck to Lincoln, July 5, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVII., Part II., pp. 71, 72.

which Lincoln gave him, replying, "Your telegram, just received, saves Western Tennessee."

It was found by the Washington authorities that the early reports of McClellan's reverses had been unduly exaggerated, and that by straining resources in the East the Western armies might be left undiminished. But with this conviction President Lincoln also reached the decision that the failure of the Richmond campaign must be remedied by radical measures. To devise new plans, to elaborate and initiate new movements, he needed the help of the highest attainable professional skill. None seemed at the moment so available as that of Halleck. Under his administration order had come out of chaos in Missouri, and under his guiding control, however feeble in the particular cases that we have pointed out, the Western armies had won the victories of Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Pea Ridge, Shiloh, Island No. 10, and Corinth. It was a record of steady success, which justified the belief that a general had been found who might be intrusted with the direction of the war in its larger combinations. The weakness of his present plans had not yet been developed. Accordingly on the 11th of July this order was made by the President: "That Major-General Henry W. Halleck be assigned to command the whole land forces of the United States as general-in-chief, and that he repair to this capital as soon as he can with safety to the positions and operations within the department under his charge."

Lincoln, Order, July 11, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVII., Part II., p. 90.

It seemed at the moment the best that could be done. In his short Corinth campaign Halleck had substantially demonstrated his unfitness for the

CHAP. XIX. leadership of an army in the field. He had made a grievous mistake in coming away from his department headquarters at St. Louis. He was a thinker and not a worker; his proper place was in the military study and not in the camp. No other soldier in active service equaled him in the technical and theoretical acquirements of his profession. The act of the President in bringing him to Washington restored him to his more natural duty.

In following the further career of Halleck, one of the incidents attending this transfer needs to be borne in mind. The first intimation of the change came in the President's dispatch of the 2d of July which asked: "Please tell me could you make me a flying visit for consultation without endangering the service in your department?" A few days later one of the President's friends went from Washington to Corinth bearing a letter of introduction to Halleck, explaining among other things: "I know the object of his visit to you. He has my cheerful consent to go, but not my direction. He wishes to get you and part of your force, one or both, to come here. You already know I should be exceedingly glad of this if in your judgment it could be without endangering positions and operations in the Southwest." To this Halleck replied on July 10: "Governor Sprague is here. If I were to go to Washington I could advise but one thing — to place all the forces in North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington under one head, and hold that head responsible for the result."

Lincoln to Halleck, July 6, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVI., Part II., p. 100.

Halleck to Lincoln, July 10, 1862. W. R. Vol. XVI., Part II., p. 117.

It is doubtful if Halleck measured fully the import of his language; or whether he realized the danger and burden of the responsibility which, if

he did not invite, he at least thus voluntarily assumed. Nominally he became general-in-chief, but in actual practice his genius fell short of the high duties of that great station. While he rendered memorable service to the Union, his judgment and resolution sometimes quailed before the momentous requirements of his office, and thrust back upon the President the critical and decisive acts which overawed him. In reality, he was from the first only what he afterwards became by technical orders — the President's chief-of-staff. CHAP. XIX.

CHAPTER XX

YORKTOWN

CHAP. XX.

GENERAL McCLELLAN arrived at Fort Monroe on the morning of the 2d of April, 1862, to begin the campaign against Richmond on the route chosen by himself. According to his own report he had the next day ready to move 58,000 men and 100 guns, besides the division artillery. They were of the flower of the volunteer army, and included also Sykes's brigade of regulars, Hunt's artillery reserve, and several regiments of cavalry. These were all on the spot, prepared to march, and an almost equal number were on their way to join him. He seemed at first to appreciate the necessity for prompt and decisive action, and with only one day's delay issued his orders for the march up the Peninsula between the York and James rivers.

The first obstacle that he expected to meet was the force of General J. B. Magruder at Yorktown, which McClellan estimated at from 15,000 to 20,000. Magruder says his force consisted of 11,000, of which 6000 were required for the fortifications of Yorktown and only 5000 were left to hold the line across the Peninsula, 13 miles in length. His only object was to delay as long as possible the advance

Magruder, Report. W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 405.

of the National troops upon Richmond, and his dispositions were made to that end. If he had had troops enough, he says that he would have made his line of defense between Ship Point, on the York, and the mouth of the Warwick, on the James. But his force being insufficient for that purpose, he took up as a second line the Warwick River, which heads only a mile or so from Yorktown and empties into the James some thirteen miles to the south. Yorktown and its redoubts, united by long curtains and flanked by rifle-pits, formed the left of his line, which was continued by the Warwick River, a sluggish and boggy stream running through a dense wood fringed with swamps. The stream was dammed in two places, at Wynn's Mill and at Lee's Mill; and Magruder constructed three more dams to back up the river and make the fords impassable. Each of these dams was protected by artillery and earthworks. CHAP. XX.

General McClellan was ignorant not only of these preparations made to receive him, but also of the course of the river and the nature of the ground through which it ran. He knew something of the disposition of Magruder's outposts on his first line, and rightly conjectured that they would retire as he advanced. His orders for the 4th of April were therefore punctually carried out, and he seemed to expect no greater difficulty in his plan for the next day.[1] He divided his force into two columns — Heintzelman to take the right and march directly to Yorktown; and Keyes, taking the road to the left, to push on to the Half-way 1862.

[1] In a letter on the 3d he wrote: "I hope to get possession of Yorktown day after to-morrow." "McClellan's Own Story," p. 307.

CHAP. XX. House in the rear of Yorktown, on the Williamsburg road. He expected Keyes to be there the same day, to occupy the narrow ridge in that
1862. neighborhood, "to prevent the escape of the garrison at Yorktown by land, and to prevent reënforcements from being thrown in." Heintzelman went forward to the place assigned him in front of Yorktown, meeting with little opposition. Keyes marched by the road assigned him until he came to the enemy's fortified position at Lee's Mill, which to use General McClellan's words, "he found altogether stronger than was expected, unapproachable
W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 10. by reason of the Warwick River, and incapable of being carried by assault." The energetic and active campaign that day begun was at once given up. Two days of reconnaissances convinced him that he could not break through the line which Magruder's little army of 11,000 men had stretched across the Peninsula, and he resolved upon a regular siege of the place. He began at the same time that campaign of complaint and recrimination against the Government which he kept up as long as he remained in the service.

He always ascribed the failure of his campaign at this point to two causes: first, to the want of assistance by the navy in reducing Yorktown, and second, to the retention of McDowell's corps in front of Washington. If the navy had silenced the batteries at Yorktown and Gloucester, he contended, he could have gone up the Peninsula unchecked. This is unquestionably true; it would be equally true to say in general terms that if somebody else would do our work we would have no work to do. He brings no proof to show that

he had any right to expect that the navy would do this for him. It is true that he asked before he left Washington that the navy might coöperate with him in this plan, and received in reply the assurance that the navy would render him all the assistance in its power. The sworn testimony of Captain Fox, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and of Admiral Goldsborough, shows that nothing was promised that was not performed, and that the navy stood ready to give, and did give, all the assistance to the army which was possible. Captain Fox said: "Wooden vessels could not have attacked the batteries at Yorktown and Gloucester with any degree of success. The forts at Yorktown were situated too high, were beyond the reach of naval guns; and I understand that General McClellan never expected any attack to be made upon them by the navy."

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Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 630.

Ibid., p. 631 *et seq.*

Admiral Goldsborough's evidence is to the same effect: he promised that the *Merrimac* should never go up the York River, and she did not; he did everything that General McClellan requested of him. His orders from the department were clear and urgent, though general; he was to extend to the army, at all times, any and all aid that he could render; and he never refused to honor any draft that was made upon him.

The greatest of McClellan's grievances was the retention of McDowell's corps, and his clamor in regard to this was so loud and long as to blind many careless readers and writers to the facts in the case. We have stated them already, but they may be briefly recapitulated here. A council of war of General McClellan's corps commanders,

CHAP. XX. 1862. called by himself, had decided that Washington could not be safely left without a covering force of 55,000, including the garrisons of the forts. When he had gone, General Wadsworth reported that he had left only nineteen thousand, and had ordered away nearly half of these. Two eminent generals in the War Department investigated this statement and found it true, whereupon the President ordered that McDowell's corps should for the present remain within reach of Washington. McClellan took with him to the Peninsula an aggregate force of over 100,000 men, afterwards largely increased. His own morning report of the 13th of April, signed by himself and his adjutant-general, shows that he had with him actually present for duty 100,970. With this overwhelming superiority of numbers he could have detached thirty thousand men at any moment to do the work that he had intended McDowell to do. But all the energy he might have employed in this work he diverted in attacking the Administration at Washington, which was doing all that it could do to support and provide for his army.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 97.

The attitude of the President towards him at this time may be seen from the following letter of the 9th of April, in which Mr. Lincoln answers McClellan's complaints with as much consideration and kindness as a father would use towards a querulous and petulant child:

> Your dispatches complaining that you are not properly sustained, while they do not offend me, do pain me very much.
>
> Blenker's division was withdrawn from you before you left here, and you know the pressure under which I did it,

and, as I thought, acquiesced in it — certainly not without reluctance. CHAP. XX.

After you left, I ascertained that less than twenty thousand unorganized men, without a single field battery, were all you designed to be left for the defense of Washington and Manassas Junction, and part of this even was to go to General Hooker's old position. General Banks's corps, once designed for Manassas Junction, was diverted and tied up on the line of Winchester and Strasburg, and could not leave it without again exposing the upper Potomac and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. This presented, or would present when McDowell and Sumner should be gone, a great temptation to the enemy to turn back from the Rappahannock and sack Washington. My explicit order that Washington should, by the judgment of all the commanders of army corps, be left entirely secure, had been neglected. It was precisely this that drove me to detain McDowell.

I do not forget that I was satisfied with your arrangement to leave Banks at Manassas Junction; but when that arrangement was broken up, and nothing was substituted for it, of course I was constrained to substitute something for it myself. And allow me to ask, do you really think I should permit the line from Richmond via Manassas Junction to this city to be entirely open, except what resistance could be presented by less than twenty thousand unorganized troops? This is a question which the country will not allow me to evade.

There is a curious mystery about the number of troops now with you. When I telegraphed you on the 6th saying you had over 100,000 with you, I had just obtained from the Secretary of War a statement taken, as he said, from your own returns, making 108,000 then with you and *en route* to you. You now say you will have but 85,000 when all *en route* to you shall have reached you. How can the discrepancy of 23,000 be accounted for?[1]

[1] The discrepancy cannot be accounted for. General McClellan's official morning report of the 13th of April, four days after the date of the President's letter, gives the following: "Number of troops composing the Army of the Potomac after its disembarkation on the Peninsula: Aggregate present for duty, 100,970; on special duty, sick, and in arrest, 4265; aggregate absent, 12,486

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As to General Wool's command, I understand it is doing for you precisely what a like number of your own would have to do if that command was away.

I suppose the whole force which has gone forward for you is with you by this time, and if so, I think it is the precise time for you to strike a blow. By delay the enemy will relatively gain upon you — that is, he will gain faster by fortifications and reënforcements than you can by reënforcements alone. And once more let me tell you it is indispensable to you that you strike a blow. I am powerless to help this. You will do me the justice to remember I always insisted that going down the bay in search of a field, instead of fighting at or near Manassas, was only shifting and not surmounting a difficulty; that we would find the same enemy and the same or equal intrenchments at either place. The country will not fail to note, is now noting, that the present hesitation to move upon an intrenched enemy is but the story of Manassas repeated.

I beg to assure you that I have never written you or spoken to you in greater kindness of feeling than now, nor with a fuller purpose to sustain you, so far as, in my most anxious judgment, I consistently can. But you must act.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 15.

These considerations produced no impression upon General McClellan. From the beginning to the end of the siege of Yorktown, his dispatches were one incessant cry for men and guns. These the Government furnished to the utmost extent possible, but nothing contented him. His hallucination of overwhelming forces opposed to him began again, as violent as it was during the winter. On the 8th of April he wrote to Admiral Goldsborough,

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—total aggregate, 117,721." Yet with statements like these on file in the War Department, over his own signature, he did not hesitate to inform the President that his force amounted to only 85,000; and even this sum dwindled so considerably, as years rolled by, that in his article, in "Battles and Leaders" (Vol. II., p. 171), on the Peninsular Campaign, he gives his available fighting force as "only some 67,000 for battle."

"I am probably weaker than they now are, or soon will be." His distress is sometimes comic in its expression. He writes on the 7th of April, "The Warwick River grows worse the more you look at it." While demanding McDowell's corps *en bloc* he asked on the 5th for Franklin's division, and on the 10th repeated this request, saying that although he wanted more, he would be responsible for the results if Franklin's division were sent him. The Government, overborne by his importunity, gave orders the same day that Franklin's division should go to him, and the arrangements for transporting it were made with the greatest diligence. He was delighted with this news; and although the weather was good and the roads improving, he did nothing but throw up earthworks until they came. They arrived on the 20th, and no use whatever was made of them! He kept them in the transports in which they had come down the bay more than two weeks — in fact, until the day before the siege ended. It is hard to speak with proper moderation of such a disposition of this most valuable force, so clamorously demanded by General McClellan, and so generously sent him by the President. General Webb, the intimate friend and staff-officer of McClellan, thus speaks of it:

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> The latter officer [Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander of the Corps of Engineers] was then instructed to devise the proper arrangements and superintend the landing of the troops; but, extraordinary as it may seem, more than two weeks were consumed in the preliminaries, and when everything was *nearly* ready for the disembarkation the enemy had vanished from the scene. . . How long it would have taken the whole of McDowell's corps to disembark at this rate . . . the reader may judge; and yet for days it

CHAP. XX. had been General McClellan's pet project, in connection with his plan of campaign, to utilize McDowell in just this manner as a flanking column.

Webb, "The Peninsula," pp. 61, 62.

The simple truth is, there was never an hour during General McClellan's command of the army that he had not more troops than he knew what to do with; yet he was always instinctively calling for more. Mr. Stanton one day said of him, with natural hyperbole: "If he had a million men, he would swear the enemy had two millions, and then he would sit down in the mud and yell for three." He repeatedly telegraphed to Washington that he expected to fight an equal or greater force — in fact, "all the available force of the rebels" in the neighborhood of Yorktown. We have the concurrent testimony of all the Confederate authorities that no such plan was ever thought of. Magruder's intentions, as well as his orders from Richmond, were merely to delay McClellan's advance as long as practicable. His success in this purpose surpassed his most sanguine expectations. In the early days of April he was hourly expecting an attack at some point on his thinly defended line of thirteen miles, guarded, as he says, by only 5000 men, exclusive of the 6000 who garrisoned Yorktown. "But to my utter surprise," he continues, "he permitted day after day to elapse without an assault." At last, no less to his astonishment than to his delight, Magruder discovered that McClellan was beginning a regular siege, which meant a gain of several weeks for the rebel defense of Richmond, and absolute safety for the concentration of rebel troops in the mean time.

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W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 406.

It is now perfectly clear that McClellan could

have carried the line of Magruder by assault at any time during the early days of April. From the mass of testimony to this effect before us we will take only two or three expressions, of the highest authority. General A. S. Webb says: "That the Warwick line could have been readily broken within a week after the army's arrival before it, we now know." General Heintzelman says, in his evidence before the Committee on the Conduct of the War: "I think if I had been permitted, when I first landed on the Peninsula, to advance, I could have isolated the troops in Yorktown, and the place would have fallen in a few days; but my orders were very stringent not to make any demonstration."

Webb, "The Peninsula," p. 59.

Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. Part I., pp. 346, 347.

General Barnard, McClellan's chief of engineers, says in his final report of the campaign that the lines of Yorktown should have been assaulted:

> There is reason to believe that they were not held by strong force when our army appeared before them, and we know that they were far from complete. . . Our troops toiled a month in the trenches, or lay in the swamps of the Warwick. We lost few men by the siege, but disease took a fearful hold of the army, and toil and hardship, unrelieved by the excitement of combat, impaired the *morale*. We did not carry with us from Yorktown so good an army as we took there.

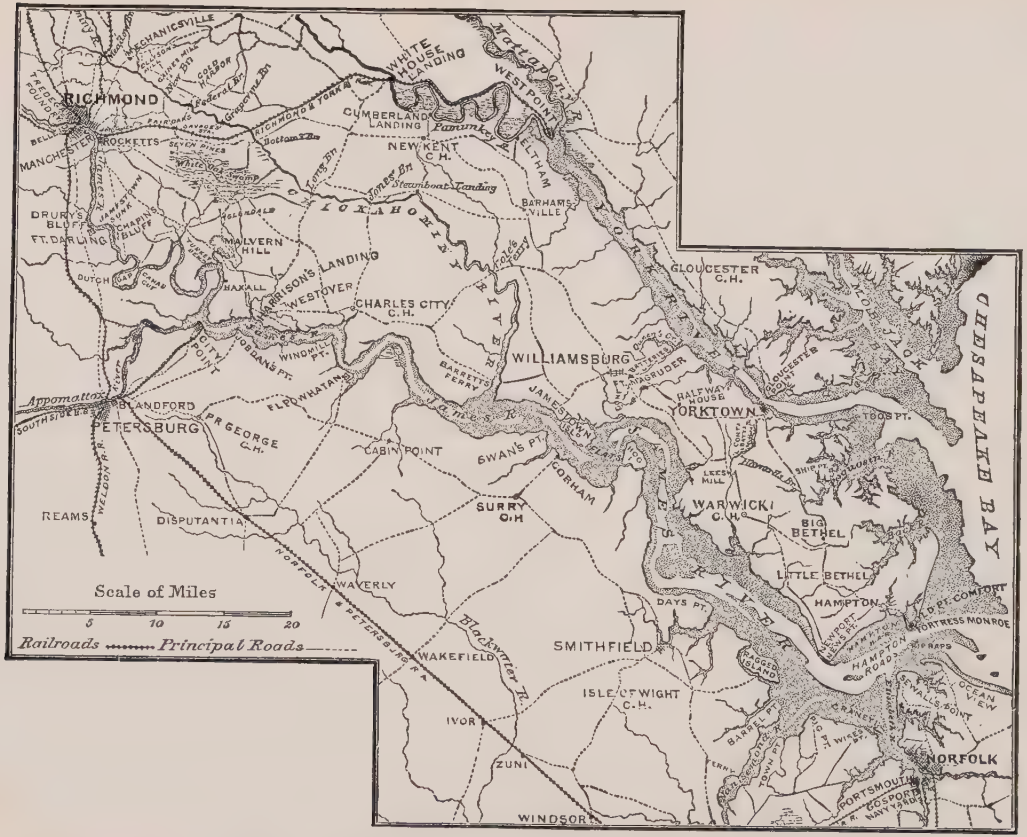
W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., pp. 129, 130

The testimony of the enemy is the same. Johnston, so soon as he came to examine it, regarded the position of Magruder as clearly untenable; saw that McClellan could not be defeated there; that the line was too long to be successfully defended; that the back-water was as much a protection to one side as the other; that there was a considerable unfortified space between Yorktown and the head of the stream open to attack; and that the posi-

CHAP. XX. tion could at any time be turned by way of York River. Every one seemed to see it except General McClellan. He went on sending dispatches every day to Washington for heavier guns and more men, digging a colossal system of earthworks for gradual approach upon one side of an intrenched camp of no strategic value whatever, the rear of which was entirely open; preparing with infinite labor and loss the capture of a place without a prisoner, the effect of which at the best would be merely to push an army back upon its reserves.

1862. Even so late as the 16th of April, an opportunity to break Magruder's line was clearly presented to McClellan and rejected. He had ordered General W. F. Smith to reconnoiter a position known as Dam No. 1, between Lee's and Wynn's Mills, where there was a crossing covered by a one-gun battery of the enemy. For this purpose Smith pushed Brooks's Vermont brigade with Mott's battery somewhat close to the dam, carrying on a sharp fire. From this point he examined at his leisure, and in fact controlled, the position opposite, finding it feebly defended. A young officer of Brooks's staff, Lieutenant E. M. Noyes, crossed the river below the dam, where the water was only waist deep, and approached within fifty yards of the enemy's works. Returning after this daring feat, he repeated his observations to General Smith and to General McClellan, who had arrived on the ground and had ordered Smith to bring up his entire division to hold the advanced position occupied by Brooks's brigade. Smith, who perceived the importance of Noyes's intelligence, obtained permission to send a party across the stream to see if the enemy's works

Webb, "The Peninsula," p. 64.



MAP OF THE PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.

had been sufficiently denuded to enable a column to effect a lodgment. Four companies of the Third Vermont, numbering two hundred men, under Captain F. C. Harrington, were ordered to cross the river to ascertain "the true state of affairs." They dashed through the stream, and in a few moments gained the enemy's rifle-pits, where they maintained themselves with the utmost gallantry for half an hour. The enemy was thrown into great confusion by this bold and utterly unexpected movement. There were still several hours of daylight left, and another attempt was made to cross at the same point with a force no larger than Harrington's, assisted by a diversion of an equal force at the dam above. But the enemy being now thoroughly aroused and concentrated, the crossing was not made. It appears from General Smith's report that no attempt to mass the troops of the division for an assault was made; the only intention seemed to be "to secure to us the enemy's works if we found them abandoned!" He adds: "The moment I found resistance serious, and the numbers opposed great, I acted in obedience to the warning instructions of the general-in-chief, and withdrew the small number of troops exposed from under fire." "Thus," says General Webb, "a fair opportunity to break the Warwick line was missed."

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W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 366.

The importance of this incident may be best appreciated by reading General Magruder's account of it. He calls it a serious attempt to break his line at the weakest part. If, instead of two hundred men, Smith had felt authorized to push over his entire division, the Peninsular Campaign might have had a very different termination.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 406.

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McClellan announced the movement of General Smith in a somewhat excited dispatch to the War Department, which Mr. Stanton answered with still more enthusiastic congratulation. "Good for the first lick!" he shouts; "Hurrah for Smith and the one-gun battery"—showing the intense eagerness of the Government to find motives for satisfaction and congratulation in McClellan's conduct. But there was no sequel to the movement; indeed, General McClellan's dispatches indicate considerable complacency that Smith was able to hold the position gained. General Webb says, "Reconnaissances were made, . . . but no assaulting columns were ever organized to take advantage of any opportunity offered."

Webb, "The Peninsula," p. 63.

No congratulations or encouragements from the Government now availed anything with McClellan. Struggling with a command and a responsibility too heavy for him, he had fallen into a state of mind in which prompt and energetic action was impossible. His double illusion of an overpowering force of the enemy in his front, and of a Government at Washington that desired the destruction of his army, was always present with him, paralyzing all his plans and actions. In his private letters he speaks of Washington as that "sink of iniquity"; of the people in authority as "those treacherous hounds"; of the predicament he is in, "the rebels on one side and the Abolitionists and other scoundrels on the other." "I feel," he says, "that the fate of a nation depends upon me, and I feel that I have not one single friend at the seat of Government"—this at a moment when the Government was straining every nerve to support him.

"McClellan's Own Story," pp. 313, 316, 317.

The Confederates, as Mr. Lincoln had said, were daily strengthening their position by fortification and reënforcement. On the 17th of April, General Joseph E. Johnston took command on the Peninsula. He says that his force after the arrival of G. W. Smith's and Longstreet's divisions amounted to about 53,000 men, including 3000 sick; he places the force of McClellan at 133,000, including Franklin's division of 13,000 floating idly on their transports.[1] He did nothing more than to observe the Union army closely, to complete the fortifications between Yorktown and the inundations of the Warwick, and to hold his own forces in readiness for a movement to the rear. He kept himself informed of the progress of McClellan's engineering work against Yorktown, as it was not his intention to remain long enough to spend an hour under fire. He did not expect to be hurried; he had long before that given his opinion that McClellan did not especially value time. Every day of delay was of course an advantage, but "an additional day or two gained by enduring a cannonade would have been dearly bought in blood," and he therefore determined to go before McClellan's powerful artillery should open upon him. Seeing, as we now can, what was occurring upon both sides of the Warwick River, there is something humiliating and not without a touch of the pathetic in the contrast between the clear vision of Johnston and the blindness of McClellan, in relation to each other's attitude and purpose. While the former was simply watching for the flash of the first guns to

CHAP. XX. 1862.

Johnston, "Narrative," p. 117.

[1] His own force is correctly given. He only slightly exaggerates that of McClellan.

CHAP. XX. take his departure, glad of every day that the firing was postponed, but entirely indifferent to the enormous development of the siege-works going on in his sight, the latter was toiling with prodigious industry and ability over his vast earthworks and his formidable batteries, only pausing to send importunate dispatches to Washington for more guns and more soldiers, forbidding the advance of a picket beyond specified limits, carefully concealing every battery until all should be finished, not allowing a gun to be fired until the whole thunderous chorus should open at once, firmly convinced that when he was entirely ready he would fight and destroy the whole rebel army.

Nearly one hundred heavy Parrott guns, mortars, and howitzers were placed in battery against the town and camp of Yorktown and its outlying works, only 1500 or 2000 yards away. Against the opinion of his ablest staff-officers, McClellan kept this immense armament silent for weeks while he was continually adding to it. General Barnard, Chief of Engineers, says: "We should have opened our batteries on the place as fast as they were completed." General Barry, Chief of Artillery, says:

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 130.

> The ease with which the 100 and 200 pounders of this battery [Battery No. 1] were worked, the extraordinary accuracy of their fire, and the since ascertained effects produced upon the enemy by it, force upon me the conviction that the fire of guns of similar caliber and power in the other batteries at much shorter ranges, combined with the cross-vertical fire of the 13 and 10 inch sea-coast mortars, would have compelled the enemy to surrender or abandon his works in less than twelve hours.

Ibid., p. 348.

General McClellan's only reason for refusing to allow the batteries to open fire as they were suc-

cessively finished was the fear that they would be silenced by the converging fire of the enemy as soon as they betrayed their position. That this was a gross error is shown by the Confederate reports. They were perfectly cognizant of the progress and disposition of his batteries; the very good reason why they did not annoy him in their construction was that the Union lines were, to use Johnston's words, "beyond the range of our old-fashioned ship guns." A few experimental shots were fired from the shore batteries on the 1st of May; the effect of them convinced the Confederate general of the enormous surplus strength of the Federal artillery. The shots from their first volley fell in the camp of the Confederate reserve, a mile and a half beyond the village.[1] CHAP. XX. 1862.

How long General McClellan would have continued this futile labor if he had been left alone, it is impossible to conjecture. If there was at first a limit in his own mind to the work to be done and the time to be consumed, it must have been con-

[1] On the 23d of April McClellan wrote to the President: "Do not misunderstand the apparent inaction here — not a day, not an hour has been lost. Works have been constructed that may almost be called gigantic, roads built through swamps and difficult ravines, material brought up, batteries built. I have to-night in battery and ready for action five 100-pounder Parrott guns, ten 4½-inch ordnance guns, eighteen 20-pounder Parrotts, six Napoleon guns, and six 10-pounder Parrotts; this not counting the batteries in front of Smith and on his left — 45 guns. I will add to it to-morrow night five 30-pounder Parrotts, six 20-pounder Parrotts, from five to ten 13-inch mortars, and — if it arrives in time — one 200-pounder Parrott. Before sundown to-morrow I will essentially complete the redoubts necessary to strengthen the left of the first parallel; and will construct that parallel as far as Wormley's Creek from the left, and probably all the way to York River to-morrow night. *I will then be secure against sorties.*" — McClellan to Lincoln. MS. With a force of three to one he was wasting weeks in defensive works. 1862.

CHAP. XX. tinually moved forward until it passed out of sight. Up to the last moment he was still making demands which would have taken weeks to fill. The completion of one work was simply an incentive to the
1862. beginning of another. Thus, on the 28th of April, — a week after Franklin's arrival,— at a time when Johnston was already preparing to start for Richmond, he telegraphs to Washington as a pleasant bit of news that he had "commenced a new battery from right of first parallel," and adds: "Would be glad to have the 30-pounder Parrotts in the works
W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 126. around Washington at once. Am very short of that excellent gun." It is not difficult to imagine how such a dispatch at such a time smote upon the intense anxiety of the President. He answered in wonder and displeasure: "Your call for Parrott
Lincoln to McClellan, May 1, 1862. Ibid., p. 130. guns from Washington alarms me, chiefly because it argues indefinite procrastination. Is anything to be done?" But the general, busy with his trenches and his epaulments, paid no regard to this searching question. Two days later, May 1, he continued his cheery report of new batteries and rifle-pits, and adds, "Enemy still in force and working hard"; and these stereotyped phrases continued with no premonition of any immediate change until on the 4th he telegraphed, "Yorktown is in our possession," and later in the day began to magnify his victory, telling what spoils he had captured, and ending with the sounding phrases, "No time shall be lost. . . I shall push the enemy to the wall."

Johnston had begun his preparation to move on
1862. the 27th of April, and on the 3d of May, finding that McClellan's batteries were now ready to open, — a fact apparently not yet known to McClellan,—

he gave orders for the evacuation, which began at midnight. He marched away from Yorktown with about 50,000 men. General McClellan, by his own morning report of the 30th of April, had in his camps and trenches, and scrambling in haste on board the transports that they had quitted the day before, an aggregate of 112,392 present for duty, the total aggregate present and absent being 130,378.

CHAPTER XXI

FROM WILLIAMSBURG TO FAIR OAKS

CHAP. XXI.

Webb, "The Peninsula," p. 69.

THE evacuation of Yorktown took General McClellan so completely by surprise that a good deal of valuable time was lost in hurried preparation to pursue the retiring enemy. Franklin's division, after their fortnight of delay on the transports, had been disembarked. They were hastily returned to their boats. Several hours were consumed in having the commands properly provisioned for the march. The evacuation was discovered at

May 4 1862.

dawn, and it was noon before the first column started in pursuit. Johnston by this time had taken his entire command to Williamsburg. Knowing that McClellan's advance would soon reach him, he made his dispositions at his leisure. He posted a strong rear-guard there under Longstreet to protect the movement of his trains. The Union cavalry under George Stoneman came into collision with this force about dark and was repulsed, losing one gun. The main body of the pursuing army came up during the night, under the command of Generals Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes. It is strongly illustrative of General McClellan's relations with his corps commanders, that neither of these generals had any orders from him as to the conduct of

the battle which was inevitable as soon as they overtook the enemy, and there was even serious doubt as to which among them was in command of the forces. Sumner had been ordered by the general-in-chief to take command in his absence, but these orders had not been communicated to Heintzelman, who thought that he was to take control of the movement. There was some confusion of orders as to the roads to be taken by the different commands, in consequence of which Hooker came into position on the left of the line and Smith on the right. The contrary disposition had been intended. CHAP. XXI.

The morning of the 5th came with no definite plan of battle arranged. General Hooker, following his own martial instincts, moved forward and attacked the enemy at half-past seven and was soon hotly engaged. He fought almost the entire rear-guard of Johnston during the whole forenoon. Heavy reënforcements thrown against him checked his advance and caused him to lose the ground he had gained. Hooker speaks in his report with much bitterness, not wholly unjustified, of the manner in which his division was left to fight an overwhelming force, "unaided in the presence of more than 30,000 of their comrades with arms in their hands," and we search the reports of General McClellan and the corps commanders in vain for any adequate explanation of this state of things. Later in the day, Hancock had a hard fight, with greater success, on the right. May, 1862.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 468.

The whole day was bloody and expensive, and without adequate result. The zeal of Heintzelman, the heroism of Hooker and Hancock and their brave troops, were well-nigh wasted. There was no

CHAP. XXI. head, no intelligent director, no understood plan. McClellan arrived late in the day and was unable to contribute anything to the result, although the cheers with which he was welcomed showed how fully he possessed the confidence and affection of his troops. He had not anticipated so early an engagement, and was spending the day at Yorktown to dispatch Franklin's division up the river.

Actual contact with the enemy, however, made, as it always did, an exaggerated impression upon him. The affair which, when he heard of it at Yorktown, seemed to him a mere skirmish with a rear-guard, acquired a portentous importance when surveyed in the light of the bivouac at Williamsburg, amidst the actual and visible signs of a sanguinary conflict. His dispatch to the War Department, written at ten o'clock the night of the battle, betrays great agitation, and his idiosyncrasy of multiplying the number of his enemy, as a matter of course asserts itself. "I find General Joe Johnston in front of me in strong force, probably greater a good deal than my own." After a compliment to Hancock he continues, "I learn from the prisoners taken that the rebels intend to dispute every step to Richmond." One can only wonder what he expected them to say. "I shall run the risk of at least holding them in check here, while I resume the original plan. My entire force is undoubtedly inferior to that of the rebels, who will fight well."[1] Thus while Johnston was profit-

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 448.

[1] On the 6th of May the veteran General Wool sent this dispatch to the War Department, showing how his elders regarded at the time these jeremiads of the young general: "The desponding tone of Major-General McClellan's dispatch of last evening more than surprises me. He says his entire force is undoubt-

ing by the darkness to prepare to continue his retrograde march at daybreak, McClellan was nerving himself to stand the risk of holding his ground at Williamsburg, while he "resumed the original plan" of a movement by water. CHAP XXI.

The next day, when he discovered that the enemy had moved away, leaving their wounded on the field of battle, his apprehension of attack subsided, but other difficulties rose before him. He telegraphed on the 7th to the Secretary of War: "Until the roads improve both in front and rear no large body of troops can be moved." Johnston had apparently no difficulty in moving his troops, which McClellan thought a larger body than his own. W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 146.

Reaching a place called Baltimore Cross-Roads, Johnston halted for five days, and, after receiving intelligence of the evacuation of Norfolk and the destruction of the *Merrimac*, apprehending an attack upon Richmond by way of the James River, he ordered his forces to cross the Chickahominy on the 15th. Two days after this the rebel army encamped about three miles from Richmond, in front of the line of redoubts that had been constructed the previous year. It was a time of great apprehension, almost of dismay, at Richmond. The Confederate President, and most of his Cabinet, hastily sent their families to places of safety. Mr. Davis, whose religious feelings always took on a peculiar intensity in critical times, had himself baptized at home, and privately confirmed at St. Paul's Church. There was great doubt whether

edly considerably inferior to that of the rebels. If such is the fact, I am still more surprised that they should have abandoned Yorktown."—W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 143.

CHAP. XXI. the city could be successfully defended; the most important archives of the Government were sent, some to Lynchburg and some to Columbia.[1]

But General Johnston had reason to confirm his opinion that McClellan cared little for time. The latter remained several days at Williamsburg after he had ascertained that the enemy had disappeared from in front of him. His visions of overwhelming forces of rebels were now transferred

May, 1862. to Franklin's front. On the 8th he telegraphed the War Department a story of 80,000 to 120,000 opposed to Franklin, but in full retreat to the Chickahominy. On the 10th he sent an urgent appeal to Washington for more men, claiming that the enemy "are collecting troops from all quarters, especially well-disciplined troops from the South." His own army would inevitably be reduced by sickness, casualties, garrisons, and guards — as if that of the enemy would not. He therefore implored large and immediate reënforcements in a tone which implied that the President could make armies by executive decree. "If I am not reënforced," he says, "it is probable that I will be obliged to fight nearly double my numbers, strongly intrenched." In face of a morning report of over 100,000 men present for duty he says: "I do not

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 26. think it will be at all possible for me to bring more than 70,000 men upon the field of battle."

He still protested stoutly against the original organization of his army corps, and asked that he might be permitted to break it up or at least to suspend it. He disliked his corps commanders,

[1] J. B. Jones, "A Rebel War Clerk's Diary." Vol. I., pp. 123, 126, entries of May 8, May 10, and May 19, 1862.

and naturally wished his friends to exercise those important commands. He blamed the corps organization for all the trouble at Williamsburg, and said, if he had come on the field half an hour later, all would have been lost. The President was greatly wounded by this persistent manifestation of bad temper, but bore it after his fashion with untiring patience and kindness. He sent an official order, authorizing McClellan to suspend temporarily the corps organization in the Army of the Potomac, and to adopt any that he might see fit, until further orders. At the same time he wrote a private letter to the general, full of wise and kindly warning. He said: CHAP. XXI.

I ordered the army corps organization not only on the unanimous opinion of the twelve generals whom you had selected and assigned as generals of divisions, but also on the unanimous opinion of every military man I could get an opinion from, and every modern military book, yourself only excepted. Of course I did not on my own judgment pretend to understand the subject. I now think it indispensable for you to know how your struggle against it is received in quarters which we cannot entirely disregard. It is looked upon as merely an effort to pamper one or two pets and to persecute and degrade their supposed rivals. I have had no word from Sumner, Heintzelman, or Keyes. The commanders of these corps are of course the three highest officers with you, but I am constantly told that you have no consultation or communication with them; that you consult and communicate with nobody but General Fitz-John Porter and perhaps General Franklin. I do not say these complaints are true or just, but at all events it is proper you should know of their existence. Do the commanders of corps disobey your orders in anything?

When you relieved General Hamilton of his command the other day, you thereby lost the confidence of at least one of your best friends in the Senate. And here let me

CHAP. XXI.

say, not as applicable to you personally, that Senators and Representatives speak of me in their places as they please without question, and that officers of the Army must cease addressing insulting letters to them for taking no greater liberty with them.

But to return: Are you strong enough — are you strong enough, even with my help — to set your foot upon the necks of Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes all at once? This is a practical and very serious question for you.

Lincoln to McClellan, May 9, 1862. W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., pp. 154, 155.

The success of your army and the cause of the country are the same, and of course I only desire the good of the cause.

General McClellan accepted the authorization with alacrity and the sermon with indifference. He at once formed two provisional army corps, giving Fitz-John Porter the command of one and Franklin of the other.

After leaving Williamsburg and joining his army at Cumberland Landing, he reiterated his complaints and entreaties for reënforcements that it was not in the power of the Government to send him. His apprehension had grown to such an extent that on the 14th of May he telegraphed his conviction that he would be compelled, with 80,000 men, to fight "perhaps double my numbers" in front of Richmond; and begged that the Government would send him "by water"—apparently he did not want them to come overland—"all the disposable troops," "every man" that could be mustered. The President, anxious to leave nothing undone to help and encourage him, replied to these importunate demands first by a friendly private note, in which he said:

1862.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., pp. 26, 27.

Have done and shall do all I could and can to sustain you. I hoped that the opening of James River and

putting Wool and Burnside in communication, with an open road to Richmond, or to you, had effected something in that direction. I am still unwilling to take all our force off the direct line between Richmond and here.

Lincoln to McClellan, May 15, 1862. W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 173.

He afterwards sent a dispatch through the War Department, received by McClellan on May 18, of which the essential points are as follows:

1862.

The President is not willing to uncover the capital entirely, and it is believed that even if this were prudent, it would require more time to effect a junction between your army and that of the Rappahannock by the way of the Potomac and York rivers than by a land march. In order therefore to increase the strength of the attack upon Richmond at the earliest moment, General McDowell has been ordered to march upon that city by the shortest route. He is ordered—keeping himself always in position to save the capital from all possible attack—so to operate as to put his left wing in communication with your right wing, and you are instructed to cooperate so as to establish this communication as soon as possible, by extending your right wing to the north of Richmond, . . . but charged, in attempting this, not to uncover the city of Washington; and you will give no order, either before or after your junction, which can put him out of position to cover this city. . . The President desires that General McDowell retain the command of the Department of the Rappahannock, and of the forces with which he moves forward.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 27.

Events as little foreseen by General McClellan as by the Government, and which had by him been declared impossible,—the defeat of our forces in the Shenandoah and the movement of a large rebel force to the upper Potomac,—prevented the execution of this plan. But it is worthy of notice that immediately on the receipt of the President's instructions, while he was waiting for McDowell to join him, General McClellan evinced no gratifica-

CHAP. XXI. tion at this compliance with his wishes. On the contrary, he lost no time in protesting against it, and asking that McDowell should be placed explicitly under his orders in the ordinary way. In his report, and in all his subsequent apologies for his campaign, he makes this positive assertion: "This order rendered it impossible for me to use the James River as a line of operations, and forced me to establish our depots on the Pamunkey and to approach Richmond from the north."[1] This charge is an evident afterthought. We will permit it to be answered by General Webb, who is always the friend of McClellan, and his partisan wherever the writer's intelligence and conscience allow it. He says, after quoting the claim made by McClellan in his report:

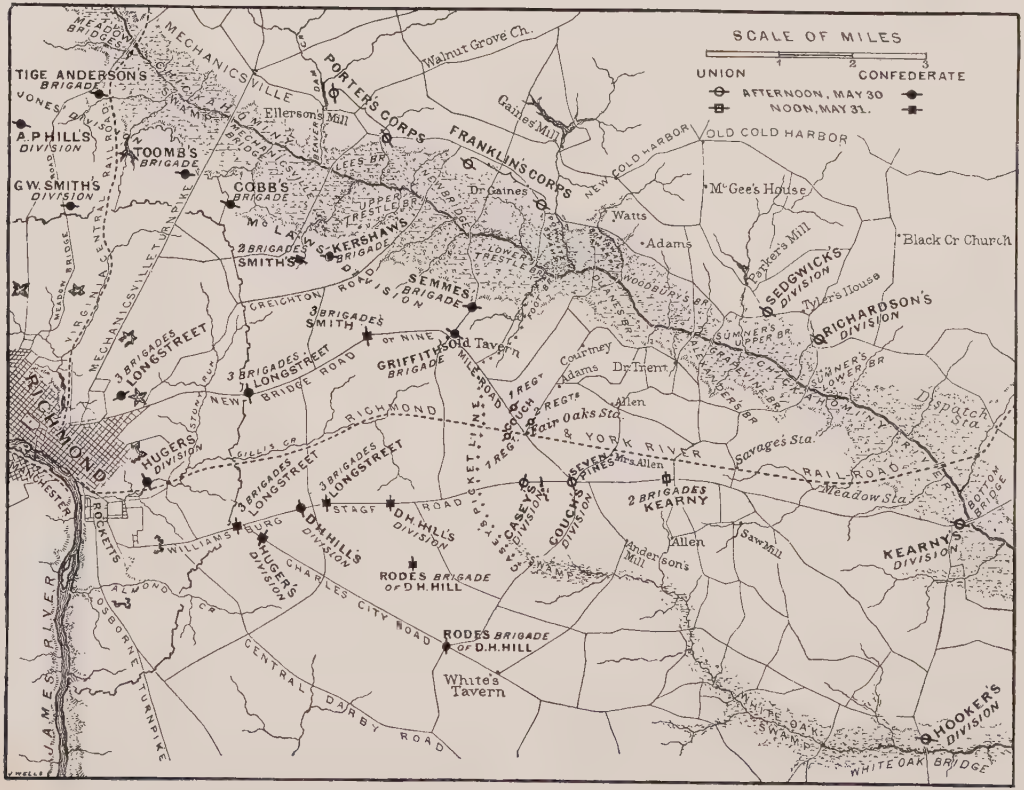
W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 29.

Ibid., p. 28.

> It is but repeating the proper criticisms made by other writers that General McClellan had frequently mentioned the Pamunkey as his prospective base, that he made no representation to the Government, at the time, that he wished to be free to move by the James, and that . . . it was within his power during the first three weeks of June, when he found that McDowell was again withheld from him, to follow the latter route. On one point there can be no question, that the position of his army, as already given, along the left bank of the Chickahominy from Bottom's towards New Bridge, on May 20, with the White

1862.

[1] Lord Wolseley, relying upon McClellan's erroneous statement, makes it the basis of an attack upon the Administration of Mr. Lincoln, which is clearly met and refuted by General James B. Fry in the "North American Review" for December, 1889. He shows not only that McClellan had established his depots on the Pamunkey before the letter of the 18th reached him, but that he had, in letters to his wife, announced his intention to "close up on the Chickahominy" and his expectation of a battle between there and Richmond. He had resolved upon the line of operations he adopted even before he left Washington (see Report of March 19), and it was only after his misfortunes that he bethought himself of charging the Government with having forced him to it.



MAP SHOWING POSITIONS PRELIMINARY TO THE BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES

House, on the Pamunkey, as the base of supplies, was one of McClellan's own choice, uninfluenced by McDowell's movements. CHAP. XXI.

Webb, "The Peninsula," p. 87.

It required ten days after the fight at Williamsburg for McClellan's headquarters to reach Cumberland Landing, on the south bank of the Pamunkey, and on the next day he established his permanent depot at White House, near by. On the 21st the army was brought together and established in line on the Chickahominy, the right wing being about seven and the left about twelve miles from Richmond, from which they were separated by two formidable barriers — the rebel army, and the river with its environment of woods and swamps, its fever-breathing airs and its sudden floods. The Chickahominy was first attacked. General McClellan began at once with great energy the building of several bridges over the stream, a work of special difficulty on account of the boggy banks, which made long approaches necessary. In this work, and in a voluminous correspondence with the President in regard to reënforcements, which we shall notice when we come to treat of those movements of Jackson in the Valley that caused the division of McDowell's force, he passed ten days; he pushed the corps of Keyes and Heintzelman across the river, and retained those of Sumner, Franklin, and Porter on the north side. May, 1862.

The monotony of camp life was broken on the 27th of May by a creditable feat of arms performed by Fitz-John Porter and his corps near Hanover Court House, where he attacked and defeated a rebel force under General Branch. The chief value of this engagement was its demonstration of the

CHAP. XXI. splendid marching and fighting qualities of the troops engaged. General McClellan was greatly annoyed that the President did not seem to attach sufficient importance to this action; but General Johnston in his "Narrative," while not diminishing the gallantry of Porter and his troops, or denying the complete defeat of Branch, treats it merely as an incident of Branch's march under orders to join General Joseph R. Anderson, which was accomplished the same day at the point designated for this junction. There was no sequel to the fight. Porter and his victorious troops marched back to camp.

1862. On the 26th of May General McClellan informed the President that he was "quietly closing in upon the enemy preparatory to the last struggle," and that he would be "free to strike" on the return of Porter. But several days elapsed without the blow being struck, until the enemy, as usual, accelerated matters by himself striking. It had been for some time the intention of General Johnston to attack the Union army before McDowell should join it; and learning, on the day of the battle of Hanover Court House, that McDowell was leaving Fredericksburg, he resolved at once to strike McClellan's force on both sides of the river. When we consider that the consolidated returns of the Army of the Potomac for the 31st of May showed an aggregate of 127,166 officers and men, of whom there were 98,008 present for duty, with 280 pieces of field artillery, and that General Johnston's force amounted to upwards of 62,000 effectives, we cannot but think it was a fortunate circumstance for him that he did not attempt to carry this heroic plan into effect. At night, when he had called his

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 33.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 204.

general officers together for their instructions, Johnston was informed that McDowell's force, which had been marching southward, had returned to Fredericksburg. He then abandoned his idea of attacking McClellan on both sides of the river, and reverted to his former plan of assailing with the greater part of his force the two corps on the south bank as soon as they had sufficiently increased the distance between themselves and the three corps on the north. CHAP. XXI.

In this plan, as in the other one,—and we shall see, farther on, that the same was the case with General Lee,—General Johnston does not seem to have been greatly troubled about a possible initiative of General McClellan. McClellan evidently had no suspicion of Johnston's intentions. At the moment that the latter was calling his generals together to give orders for the assault, McClellan was telegraphing to Washington: "Richmond papers urge Johnston to attack, now he has us away from gunboats. I think he is too able for that." W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 193.

Johnston's purpose was finally adopted and put in action with great decision and promptitude. On the 30th, D. H. Hill informed him that the Federals were in force at Seven Pines, and that the indications were that all of Keyes's corps was south of the river; to which Johnston immediately responded by telling him he would attack the next morning. Orders were given to throw twenty-three of the twenty-seven brigades of which the Confederate army consisted, against the two corps of Heintzelman and Keyes.[1] The rest were May, 1862.

[1] In "Battles and Leaders," Vol. II., p. 211, General Johnston changes this statement to "twenty-two out of twenty-eight brigades."

CHAP. XXI. to observe the river by the Meadow and New Bridges. After the plan of battle was arranged, a violent storm of rain came on and continued most of the night. This was a welcome incident to Johnston, as it inspired the hope that the river might overflow its banks and sever the communication between the two wings of the Federal army. He did not permit the rain to delay him, though the swollen creeks and soggy woods retarded the movements of his troops.

The division commanded by D. H. Hill attacked Casey's division of Keyes's corps with great impetu-
1862. osity, about one o'clock in the afternoon of May 31. Keyes's corps, supported later by that of Heintzelman, defended their ground with gallantry and pertinacity against the forces of Hill, aided and supported by the divisions of Longstreet and Huger; but when night came on, they had been forced back more than a mile and a half east of the position that they had occupied in the morning.

The forces under G. W. Smith, accompanied by Johnston in person, were in reserve near the junction of the New Bridge and Nine-mile roads. On account of a peculiar condition of the atmosphere, the sound of the musketry at Seven Pines had not reached Johnston and Smith. But about four o'clock Johnston, having been informed of the progress of affairs in Longstreet's front, determined to put Smith in upon the Union right flank, being by this time relieved of all fear of a reenforcement from the other side of the river. Fortunately for the Union cause, the forces immediately opposite this position were commanded by General Sumner, an officer whose strongest traits

were soldierly ardor and generosity. He had been ordered, as soon as the firing began, to hold himself in readiness to move to the assistance of his comrades at Fair Oaks; but he gave these orders a liberal interpretation, and instead of merely preparing to move he at once marched with two divisions to the two bridges he had built and halted them, with his leading companies at the bridges. In this manner an hour of inestimable advantage was saved. The swollen river soon carried away one of the bridges, and the other was almost submerged when the order came to Sumner to cross.

Without delaying a moment on the west bank, Sumner marched through the thick mud in the direction of the heaviest firing and repulsed the attack of Smith, who had been pressing the troops under Couch; the latter at Fair Oaks having become separated from Keyes's main force at Seven Pines. This Union success was the result of Sumner's straightforward and unhesitating march. His appointment to the command of an army corps had been bitterly opposed and never forgiven by General McClellan; he had been treated by his commander with studied neglect and disrespect; and this magnificent service was his only revenge. About seven o'clock the Confederates met their severest mischance of the day; General Johnston received, at an interval of a few moments, two severe and disabling wounds. The firing ceased, "terminated by darkness only," Johnston is careful to say, before he had been borne a mile from the field. The command had devolved by seniority of rank upon General G. W. Smith.

CHAP. XXI. There was great confusion and discouragement in the rebel councils. Jefferson Davis found hope in the suggestion that "the enemy might withdraw during the night, which would give the Confederates the moral effect of a victory." Early on June first the battle was renewed, and the Union troops reoccupied part of the ground east of Seven Pines that had been lost on the day before. At two o'clock, after the battle had ceased, General Lee took command, and during the night the Confederates withdrew.

A great battle had been fought absolutely without result. The Confederates had failed in their attempt to destroy McClellan's two outlying corps, but their failure entailed no other consequences. The losses were frightful upon both sides: the Union army, in the two days, lost 5031, and the Confederates 6134. But there was this enormous difference between the condition of the two armies: the Union troops south of the Chickahominy, though wearied by the conflict, with ranks thinned by death and wounds, had yet suffered no loss of *morale;* on the contrary, their spirits had been heightened by the stubborn fight of Saturday and the easy victory of Sunday. North of the river lay the larger portion of the army, which had not fired a gun nor lost a man in the action.

Jackson was in the Valley of the Shenandoah, detaching from the main army a force of 16,000 men. The enemy had thrown two-thirds of his whole force against McClellan's left wing, and had received more injury than he inflicted. Our right wing was intact; the material for bridging the upper Chickahominy had been ready for three

days. Even so ardent a friend of McClellan as the Prince de Joinville writes: CHAP. XXI.

> The Federals had had the defensive battle they desired; had repulsed the enemy; but arrested by natural obstacles which perhaps were not insurmountable, they had gained nothing by their success. They had missed an unique opportunity of striking a blow.[1]

Campagne de l'Armée du Potomac.

But the next day and during the week that followed, the enterprise assumed so many difficulties that McClellan could not have been expected to attempt it. The rains continued; the sluggish river became a wide-spreading flood; the ground, a mixed mass of clay and quicksand, afforded no sure standing-place for horse, foot, or artillery; most of the bridges were carried away; the army, virtually cut in two by the river, occupied itself in the arduous work of intrenching. General Lee, the ablest officer in the Southern Confederacy, his mind put entirely at ease in regard to an immediate attack upon Richmond, had leisure to devote himself to restoring the organization and *morale* of his army, and bringing from every side the reënforcements that he was to use with such effect a month later in the bloody contests from the Chickahominy to the James.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., pp. 130, 131.

[1] "The repulse of the rebels at Fair Oaks should have been taken advantage of. It was one of those occasions which, if not seized, do not repeat themselves. We now know the state of disorganization and dismay in which the rebel army retreated. We now know that it could have been followed into Richmond. Had it been so, there would have been no resistance to overcome to bring over our right wing." — Report of General J. G. Barnard, Chief of Engineers, Army of the Potomac. W. R. XI., Pt. I., p. 130.

CHAPTER XXII

"STONEWALL" JACKSON'S VALLEY CAMPAIGN

CH. XXII. 1862.

AS we have said before, it was the intention of the Administration to dispatch the whole of McDowell's corps to reënforce McClellan, as soon as the situation in Northern Virginia would permit. Franklin's division was so dispatched, in ample time to have taken part in the operations against Yorktown, though General McClellan made no use whatever of that fine body of troops until Yorktown was evacuated. Preparations were vigorously made by the Government for the march of McDowell towards Richmond, and Shields's division, one of the best of Banks's army, was ordered to reënforce him. The most important results were expected from such an attack as an officer of McDowell's ability and zeal would have made upon the left flank of the Confederate forces in front of Richmond. It is one of the admitted misfortunes of the war that this attack was never made, and the question as to who was responsible for it has given rise to much discussion. A simple statement of the facts in the case, without imputation of ignoble motives in any quarter, seems the preferable way to treat this subject. It may be profitable for a moment to consider the character

of that remarkable man, whose campaign in the Shenandoah Valley produced this derangement of the plans of the Government.

General Thomas Jonathan (commonly called "Stonewall") Jackson was by far the most interesting and picturesque figure in the Southern army. His brilliant successes and his early death enshrined him in the hearts of his associates as their foremost champion; while the intense religious enthusiasm which appeared in all his public and private utterances added the halo of the saint to the laurels of the hero. In what we shall have to say in regard to this singular character, we shall refer to no facts except those recorded by Confederate writers, and although we may not be able to accept all their conclusions, it cannot be contested that General Jackson was a man of extraordinary qualities, and a soldier whose successes were due no less to his abilities than to his good fortune and the mistakes of his adversaries.

Though connected with a family of fair standing in Virginia, his father died poor, after wasting his substance in drink and play; the boy grew up in the care of relatives, twice running away from the roof which sheltered him and returning "soiled, ragged, and emaciated by the ague." His early education was defective; he earned his living by hard labor, and for a time served as a rural constable until he accidentally received an appointment to the Military Academy at West Point. He is remembered by his contemporaries there as a slow, dull, unprepossessing youth, of great correctness of conduct and untiring industry in his studies. He served creditably in the Mexican war, and soon after it ended

R. L. Dabney, D. D., "Life and Campaigns of Lieutenant-General Thomas J. Jackson," p. 16.

Ibid., p. 21.

CH. XXII. resigned his place in the army and became a teacher in the Virginia Military School at Lexington, where he lived for ten years. He was not especially popular or successful as a teacher; his manner was lacking in tact, his character in flexibility. Had the war not come to call him forth to glory and the grave, he would probably have lived and died in that mountain village known only to his neighbors, to use Dr. Dabney's expression, "as a sincere, odd, weak man." We find in the writings of several of his eulogists, indications of singularities which border upon monomania. Colonel Fremantle says, on the authority of the Confederate General Slaughter, "When he left the United States service he was under the impression that one of his legs was getting shorter than the other; and afterwards his idea was that he only perspired on one side, and that it was necessary to keep the arm and leg of the other side in constant motion in order to preserve the circulation."

Dabney, p. 63.

Ibid., p. 112.

But the war was his opportunity. There was not a quality of heart, mind, or temperament which he possessed that did not contribute to his success and his fame. Even his weaknesses ministered to his strength. He had been a sufferer from ophthalmia and could not use his eyes at night; he had therefore acquired the habit of reviewing mentally all the reading of the day, while sitting silent in the midst of his family with his face to the wall, and had thus gained a remarkable power of concentration of thought and memory of details. His digestion in his youth was feeble and capricious; he had for that reason accustomed himself to the utmost abstemiousness; and it was no sacrifice to

him to share the meager fare of his soldiers on the march. But the quality which gained for him much of his influence in the army, and which contributed most largely to that sentiment of devotion with which his memory is regarded in the South and in England, was his intense religious enthusiasm. Anything like it is rarely met with in modern times; we must go back to the ages of unquestioning faith, to Philip II., to Torquemada, to find a parallel to it. He believed himself to be under the immediate and partisan protection of his Creator; he believed, and his biographer thinks the belief perfectly reasonable, that Heaven helped him plan his campaigns and battles; his Creator was ever present to his mind, in his own image — as good a Southerner, as earnest a hater of the Yankees, as stern a fighter, as himself. He conversed with Him constantly; he interpreted literally the injunction to "pray without ceasing." "When we take our meals," he would say, "there is the grace. When I take a draught of water, I always pause, as my palate receives the refreshment, to lift up my heart to God in thanks and prayer for the water of life. Whenever I drop a letter into the box of the post-office, I send a petition along with it for God's blessing upon its mission and upon the person to whom it is sent. When I break the seal of a letter just received, I stop to pray to God that He may prepare me for its contents, and make it a messenger of good. And so of every other familiar act of the day." A great part of his time in the saddle was passed in the act of prayer. A hundred times a day he would be seen to throw his right hand aloft and to move his

CH. XXII.

Dabney, p. 101.

Ibid., p. 106.

CH. XXII. lips in silent supplication. His constant entreaty to his friends was that they should continually pray that he might be the instrument to wreak Heaven's purposes upon his adversaries.[1] He believed himself selected especially for the work he was doing; he was a hammer in the hands of God for the destruction of the ungodly. The firmest convictions of religious duty were easily reconciled with the exigencies of the military service which seemed to violate them. He was a fanatical Sabbatarian; he would not read a letter, which arrived Saturday night, until Monday; he would not post one in such a way that it would travel on the Sabbath. Yet he would not scruple to bring on a bloody battle on Sunday, if he could catch his enemy at a disadvantage; in that case, of course, it was the Lord's will. When he was sent to destroy some railroad property, he thought with regret how many Bibles could have been printed with the proceeds; but none the less he destroyed it.

Dabney, p. 201.

The self-consciousness inseparable from such a temperament took with him its usual contrasted forms of shyness and vanity. His biographer quotes him as relating that when in Mexico he made the acquaintance of some agreeable Spanish families, but finding the ladies too fascinating, "he firmly withdrew himself, before his self-respect was tarnished." There were no bounds to his bashful self-conceit. He did not scruple to say, on every

Ibid., p. 55.

[1] Lieut.-Col. Fremantle quotes General J. E. Johnston as saying, "that although this extraordinary man did not possess any great qualifications as a strategist, and was perhaps unfit for the independent command of a large army, yet he was gifted with wonderful courage and determination, and a perfect faith in Providence that he was destined to destroy his enemy."—"Three Months in the Southern States," p. 125.

occasion where the feasibility of certain accomplishments was referred to, "I can accomplish anything I will to perform." In matters of trivial concern, such as diet and drink, he held himself up as a model. "Do as I do," he would say; "my head never aches." When he first began to lead in public prayer his excessive self-consciousness made the effort painful to himself and others — but none the less he persevered. It was especially characteristic of him that he ascribed to the Deity the credit of all that was done for him. At every promotion he received, he burst forth into ardent ejaculations of praise to Heaven; none of God's creatures ever received his thanks. When he got his first important command, he said, "I am very thankful to my kind heavenly Father for having given me such a fine brigade." After Bull Run, nettled at not having got what he deemed his fair share of newspaper notice, he wrote to his wife, "God made my brigade more instrumental than any other in repulsing the main attack"; and again, "My brigade is not a brigade of newspaper correspondents. I know that the First Brigade was the first to meet and pass our retreating forces, to push on with no other aid than the smiles of God, to arrest the victorious foe," etc., etc. Later, when the honors he had so fairly won began to come to him, he wrote, "I am very thankful to that good God who withholds no good thing from me (though I am so utterly unworthy and so ungrateful) for making me a major-general of the provisional army of the Confederate States." His joy at his promotion, however, did not prevent him from saying to his pastor, who was visiting his camp, that "promotion among men was a tempta-

CH. XXII.

Dabney, p. 72.

Ibid., p. 200.

Ibid., p. 229.

CH. XXII. tion and a trouble" and that he would not accept
Dabney, p. 248. it except in the light of a duty. He seemed incapable of gratitude to anything mortal; reminding one of Philip II., who built a monastery to God and St. Laurence to commemorate a victory and sent the generals who had won it to the scaffold.

His efforts at evangelizing the negroes, of which so much is made by his eulogists, had a peculiar character. He established and carried on a Sunday school for them with unflinching zeal, but he was too sincere an adherent of slavery to give anything
Ibid., p. 93. but oral instruction; the alphabet was too dangerous an engine to trust in their hands; they received their hymns, catechisms, and texts directly from the lips of their teachers — as was the general custom in the South. Yet on one occasion he went among the free blacks and encouraged them to contribute out of their poverty for the funds of
Ibid., p. 95. the Bible Society. Professor Dabney says, "He required all his slaves to attend the domestic worship of his family, morning and evening; and succeeded, where so many Christian masters have found entire success apparently impossible, in securing the presence of every one." But in the same paragraph, the eulogist naively gives the key of his success: "Absolute obedience was the rule of his household; and if he found chastisement was necessary to secure this, it was faithfully administered." In all these singular traits of character we discern a striking resemblance to another of the remarkable personages of this great conflict. If John Brown of Ossawatomie had been bred in a slave State and had received a West Point training,

it is hard to see in what particular he would have differed from Stonewall Jackson.[1]

It was natural that such a character as this should play a great part in a civil war. With his early training to the military art, his knowledge of details rendered unusually accurate by ten years of teaching, his memory extraordinarily strengthened by the exercise to which it had been subjected, a temperament of the greatest eagerness and ardor in the pursuit of his purposes, a will of iron, an energy which knew no fatigue and required no stimulus, a devotion to the supposed interests of his section heightened by his frank hatred and contempt of his enemy,[2] a feeling of invincibility and a disregard of danger natural to one who had no doubt of the continual presence of the Lord of Hosts by his side, helping him plant his batteries and array his columns for attack, and above all, an intense love of fighting for its own sake, and for the sake of fame, for which he longed with a devouring thirst;[3] all

Daniels, "Life of Stonewall Jackson," p. 277.

[1] Like John Brown he had faith in pikes as effective weapons in default of guns; and at the beginning of his Valley Campaign made a requisition for a thousand, which General Lee ordered to be sent him.—Lee to Gorgas, April 9, 1862. W. R. Vol. XII., Part III., pp. 844, 845.

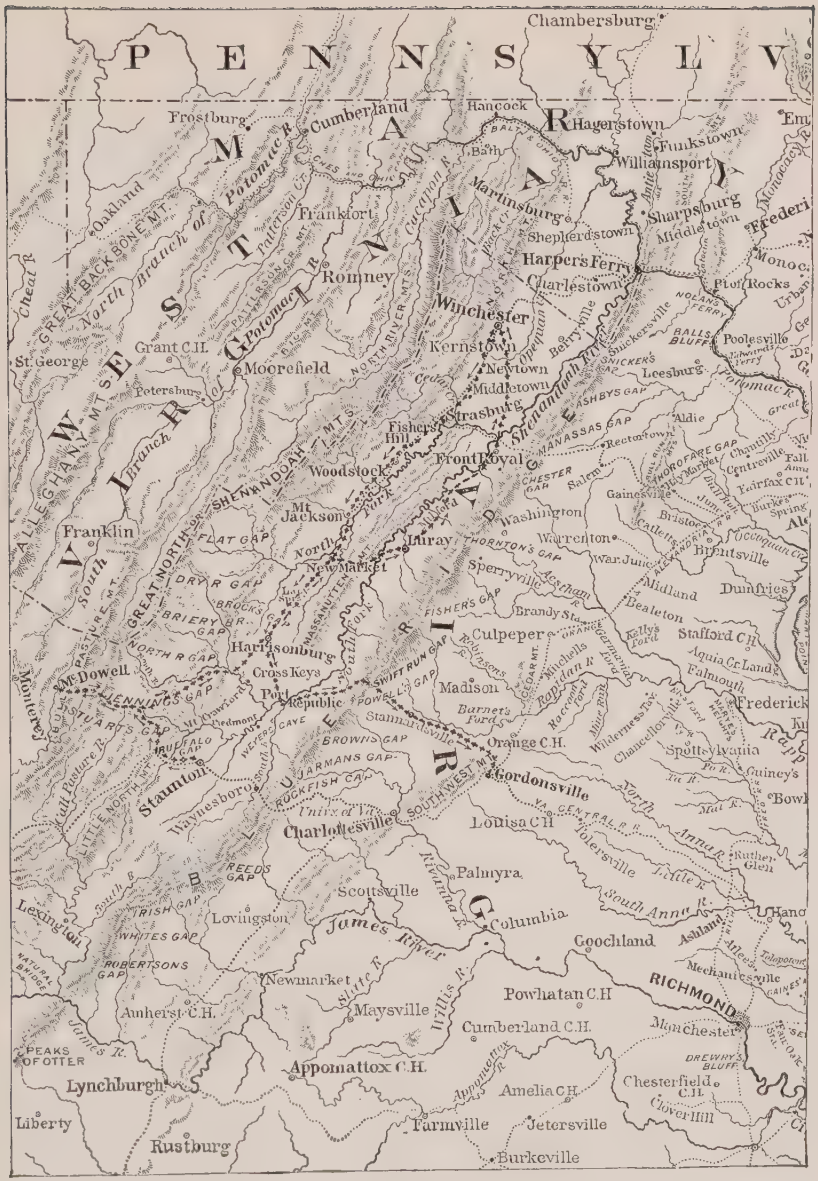
[2] The singular ferocity of hatred towards his adversaries is shown in an anecdote which would be incredible if it were related by one less intimate and less devoted than Jackson's adjutant and biographer, R. L. Dabney, D.D. Once, in Jackson's presence, Col. Patton expressed his admiration of the bravery of a Federal squad who had all been surrounded and killed in a gallant charge. He said he was sorry to see such gallant men destroyed. "The general drily remarked, 'No; shoot them all. *I* do not wish them to be brave.'" The reverend major relates this story with the greatest unction. He also states and defends Jackson's opinion that it was the true policy of the South to take no prisoners alive.—Dabney, pp. 397 and 192.

[3] Dabney relates that on one occasion in conversation with a friend, referring to his certain prospects of eternal felicity, he said, "'I would not agree to the slightest diminution of one shade of my glory there'—here he paused, as though to consider

CH. XXII. these qualities combined to make him the first of the subordinate Southern leaders, a soldier incomparable for any employment where energy, celerity, and audacity were desired.

He won great credit at the battle of Bull Run, but his first independent campaign resulted in signal defeat. In March, 1862, he was ordered by General Johnston to occupy the attention of Banks in the Shenandoah Valley. He advanced rapidly in pursuance of what he understood to be the spirit of his orders, and came in view of Shields's division at Kernstown, near Winchester, on the 22d of March. A brief skirmish took place that evening, in the course of which General Shields was severely wounded, his arm being broken by the fragment of a shell. He retired to Winchester, and General Nathan Kimball remained on the field in active command of the division. The next day, although it was Sunday, Jackson, thinking he had his enemy at a disadvantage, and unaware either of his numbers or his disposition, attacked Kimball with great impetuosity, but met with a severe repulse. Kimball, who was ably seconded by Colonels Jeremiah C. Sullivan and Erastus B. Tyler, not only beat off the attack of Jackson from both his flanks, but at the right moment assumed the offensive, and after a hotly contested fight, lasting two hours, as

what terrestrial measure he might best select to express the largeness of his joys — 'no; not for all the fame which I have acquired, or shall ever win in this world.' With these words he sank into his chair, and his friend retired awestruck as though he had seen the face of an angel. But he did not fail to notice the revelation made of Jackson's master passion by nature, in the object he had chosen to express the value of his heavenly inheritance. It was fame! Not wealth, nor domestic joys, nor literature, but well-earned fame!"



MAP OF JACKSON'S CAMPAIGN IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.

NOTE: The crossed line and arrows indicate Jackson's movements in the Valley.

night was closing in he completely defeated the Confederates, who were driven from the field, leaving their dead and wounded and several guns. Banks, coming from Harper's Ferry the next day, continued the pursuit up the Valley as far as Mount Jackson. Shields's division in this action numbered about 7000; Jackson reported his own force as between 3000 and 3500. The losses reported on each side are: Shields 590, Jackson 718. Jackson frankly acknowledged his defeat, saying to Johnston: CH. XXII.

> I engaged him [the enemy] yesterday, about 3 P. M., near Winchester, and fought until dusk, but his forces were so superior to mine that he repulsed me with the loss of valuable officers and men killed and wounded; but from the obstinacy with which our troops fought, and from their advantageous position, I am of the opinion that his loss was greater than mine in troops, but I lost one piece of artillery and three caissons.

Jackson to Johnston, March 24, 1862. W. R. Vol. XII., Part I., p. 379.

Jackson's second campaign in the Shenandoah, which gained him in full measure that fame and position which were so near to his heart, occupied about a month. It may be said to have begun in his attack upon General Milroy's forces at McDowell on the 8th of May. In this affair, as in every battle of this famous campaign, he had much larger forces than those opposed to him — a fact entirely to his credit; there were Union troops enough in the department, if they had been properly brought together, to have overwhelmed him. After a fight of several hours he defeated Milroy, who fell back to join Frémont at the town of Franklin, while Jackson moved eastward to Harrisonburg. On the way he sent dispatches to Rich- 1862.

CH. XXII. mond, detailing the position of the Union troops, and asking permission to attack them. This was granted, and he at once began a swift and stealthy march through New Market and Luray to Front Royal. It was at this time that McClellan was daily clamoring for reënforcements from Washington; and the Government, yielding to his importunity, had promised that McDowell's corps should march overland to join him. The reasons why this promise could not be kept are best set forth in the following dispatch from Mr. Lincoln, whose communications to his generals were always clearer and more definite than any that he received from them. It is dated May 25:

> General Banks was at Strasburg with about 6000 men, Shields having been taken from him to swell a column for McDowell to aid you at Richmond, and the rest of his force scattered at various places. On the 23d a rebel force of 7000 to 10,000 fell upon one regiment and two companies guarding the bridge at Front Royal, destroying it entirely; crossed the Shenandoah, and on the 24th (yesterday) pushed on to get north of Banks, on the road to Winchester. General Banks ran a race with them, beating them into Winchester yesterday evening. This morning a battle ensued between the two forces, in which General Banks was beaten back into full retreat toward Martinsburg, and probably is broken up into a total rout. Geary, on the Manassas Gap Railroad, just now reports that Jackson is now near Front Royal with ten thousand troops, following up and supporting, as I understand, the force now pursuing Banks. Also that another force of ten thousand is near Orleans, following on in the same direction. [In this Geary was mistaken. Jackson's and Ewell's forces amounted to 16,000 or 17,000.] Stripped bare, as we are here, I will do all we can to prevent them crossing the Potomac at Harper's Ferry or above. McDowell has about twenty thousand of his forces moving back to the

vicinity of Front Royal, and Frémont, who was at Franklin, is moving to Harrisonburg; both these movements intended to get in the enemy's rear.

One more of McDowell's brigades is ordered through here to Harper's Ferry; the rest of his forces remain for the present at Fredericksburg. We are sending such regiments and dribs from here and Baltimore as we can spare to Harper's Ferry, supplying their places in some sort by calling in militia from the adjacent States. We also have eighteen cannon on the road to Harper's Ferry, of which arm there is not a single one at that point. This is now our situation.

If McDowell's force was now beyond our reach, we should be entirely helpless. Apprehensions of something like this, and no unwillingness to sustain you, have always been my reason for withholding McDowell's forces from you. Please understand this, and do the best you can with the forces you have.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., pp. 31, 32.

Later in the day, the President, now sure that a large and formidable army was drawing near the Potomac, wrote a sharp dispatch to McClellan urging him either to take this opportunity to "attack Richmond or give up the job"; to which the general replied calmly that "the object of the movement is probably to prevent reënforcements being sent to me," and that the time was very near when he would attack Richmond.

Ibid., p. 32.

Ibid., p. 32.

The campaign, opened thus inauspiciously for the Union arms, went rapidly from bad to worse. A series of doleful mischances succeeded, unrelieved by a ray of good fortune or good conduct. Mr. Lincoln, at Washington, was exerting himself to the utmost, sending a dozen dispatches a day to Banks, Frémont, McDowell, and McClellan — all admirable in clearness, intelligence, and temper, always directing the right thing to be done and the best way of doing it; but nothing seemed to avail.

CH. XXII. The original surprise was inexcusable. On the 20th of May Frémont had reported to Banks that Jackson was on the way to attack him, but no proper preparation was made. After the defeat at Front Royal on the 23d, and at Winchester on the 25th, while Banks was in retreat to the Potomac, the only thought of the President was to stop Jackson at the river, and to detain him until a sufficient force could be gathered in the neighborhood of Strasburg to destroy or capture him on his return. Frémont was ordered to cross the mountains to Harrisonburg and come north down the Valley with his force. McDowell, with a competent detachment under Shields, was ordered to Front Royal; the victorious force of Jackson was met by a considerable army at the Potomac. These last were mostly raw levies not inured to marching or to fighting; but they accomplished their purpose of delaying for the moment the advance of Jackson towards Washington. His own intention, as well as his orders from Richmond, were, in the language of General Dabney, "to press the enemy at Harper's Ferry, threaten an invasion of Maryland, and an assault upon the Federal capital, and thus make the most energetic diversion possible." But on the 29th, while at Halltown, preparing for an attack upon Harper's Ferry, he received information of the movement of troops that had been ordered by the President, which, as Dabney says, "imperiously required him" to give up that attack "and provide for his own safety." He then began his precipitate retreat up the Valley, which by its celerity and success gained him even more credit than did his audacious advance.

W. R. Vol. XII., Part III., p. 208.

1862.

Dabney, p. 386.

Dabney, p. 387.

It ought not to have been allowed to succeed; it was perfectly feasible to prevent it. Had the plain orders of the President been obeyed, Jackson could not have escaped from the predicament where his headlong energy and his contempt for his adversaries had placed him. It is idle to talk of his invincibility; he was generally whipped, like other men, when the conditions were not favorable to him. He was defeated severely at Kernstown, in March, when he had been confident of victory; later, at Gaines's Mill, he did not particularly distinguish himself above others; at White Oak Swamp bridge and Malvern Hill his inefficiency in large tactics was recognized and severely criticized by generals on his own side; and Banks, with one-third his force, gave him all the work he could do at Cedar Mountain. If Frémont and McDowell had met him at Strasburg, and Banks had followed upon his heels, as Mr. Lincoln had clearly and explicitly ordered, nothing could have prevented the capture or destruction of his entire command. Each of these generals had his task assigned him; it was in each case perfectly practicable. It involved only an expeditious march to the neighborhood of Strasburg, over roads more or less rough, undisturbed by the presence of an enemy in any considerable force. CH. XXII.

General McDowell's part of the work was performed with his habitual energy and promptitude, notwithstanding the chagrin and displeasure with which he received his orders. Near evening of the 24th of May the President sent him a dispatch informing him that Frémont had been ordered by telegraph to move from Franklin on Harrisonburg, 1862.

CH. XXII. to relieve Banks, and capture or destroy Jackson's and Ewell's forces. Mr. Lincoln continued:

> You are instructed, laying aside for the present the movement on Richmond, to put 20,000 men in motion at once for the Shenandoah, moving on the line or in advance of the line of the Manassas Gap Railroad. Your object will be to capture the forces of Jackson and Ewell, either in coöperation with General Frémont or, in case want of supplies or of transportation interferes with his movements, it is believed that the force with which you move will be sufficient to accomplish this object alone. The information thus far received here makes it probable that if the enemy operate actively against General Banks you will not be able to count upon much assistance from him, but may even have to release him.

W. R. Vol. XII., Part III., p. 219.

It is remarkable that the President saw the situation with such accuracy the day before Banks's defeat at Winchester.

May 25, 1862.

This order McDowell, though he called it "a crushing blow," obeyed at once, directing Shields to take up his march to Catlett's, a station on the Orange and Alexandria road, about half way between Fredericksburg and Front Royal, and reporting that he had done so. The President sent him an acknowledgment of his alacrity, at the same time expressing his regret at the change of his orders, and adding, "Everything now depends upon the celerity and vigor of your movements." This encouraged the general to make an earnest though respectful protest, which he sent the same night to the President, setting forth his belief that coöperation between himself and Frémont was not to be counted upon; that it would take him a week or ten days to get to the Valley; that by that time the enemy would have retired. We shall see later

W. R. Vol. XII., Part III., p. 220.

Ibid.

Ibid.

that these forebodings, at least, were not realized. At the same time he telegraphed to Wadsworth, in command at Washington, his deep disgust; he did not think the rebel force in the mountains amounted to five thousand men. But with all this grumbling his deeds were better than his words; he pushed Shields forward with the greatest celerity. Shields, who was burning to go to Richmond, marched obediently, but in very bad humor. The dispatches of this officer read like a burlesque of those of his superior. He is loud in contempt of both armies in the Shenandoah. He thought when the movement first began that there was nothing in it; that the enemy would never come north; that if they did, they would be hemmed in and destroyed. As late as the 10th of May he was sure "they were not there to fight." As he went forward to Front Royal his boasting spirit asserted itself more and more. "I want no assistance," he said. He promised to give Jackson "a bloody reception," to "drive the enemy from the Shenandoah," and wanted to know if there was anything else he could do for the President — the task in question being apparently unworthy of his powers.

CH. XXII.

May 24, 1862.

W. R. Vol. XII., Part III., p. 221.

1862.

W. R. Vol. XII., Part III., p. 160.

May 26 and 27. 1862. W. R. Vol. XII., Part III., pp. 248, 256, 257.

But neither the chagrin of McDowell nor the gasconading of Shields prevented them from striving with all their might to do the work assigned them. The President kept McDowell constantly informed of the condition of affairs, detailing the progress of Jackson northward, and urging the value and importance of the service expected of the Union troops. McDowell showed himself, as he always was, worthy of the confidence reposed in him. In spite of all obstacles — accidents by rail,

CH. XXII. 1862. bad roads, and rough weather — he got Shields's advance into Front Royal on the 30th of May; that is, in little more than half the time he thought he should require for the purpose. The same day the President sent him a dispatch from Frémont saying that he would be at Strasburg, or where the enemy was, at 4 P. M., May 31; and another from Saxton at Harper's Ferry, indicating that the enemy was still there. The President added, with justifiable exultation, "It seems the game is before you."

W. R. Vol. XII., Part III., pp. 291, 292.

It remains to be seen how General Frémont executed his share of the task. On the 24th the President gave him an urgent order to move at once, by way of Harrisonburg, to the relief of Banks. He promptly replied that he would "move as ordered"; but made the unfortunate error of choosing an entirely different route from the one assigned him. Thinking the road to Harrisonburg was more or less obstructed, and off his line of supplies, he moved northward by way of Petersburg and Moorefield, in the great valley lying west of the Shenandoah Mountains, and did not even inform the President of this discretionary modification of his orders, so that, on the 27th, when they were anxiously expecting at Washington to hear from him at Harrisonburg, they were astounded at receiving tidings from him at Moorefield, two good days' march from the line of Jackson's retreat, and separated by two counties and the Shenandoah range from the place where he was desired and expected to be. In response to the President's peremptory question why he was at Moorefield when he was ordered to Harrisonburg, he made an

Ibid., Part I., p. 643.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 11.

Ibid., p. 644.

unsatisfactory reply, alleging the necessity of his choice of route, and his assumed discretion as to his orders. Dropping this matter, the President began again urging him forward to Strasburg. There was still time to repair the original error. Jackson was on the Potomac, much farther from the rendezvous than Frémont. But the latter could not be made to see the vital necessity of immediate action — his men were weary, his supplies were deficient, the roads were bad; Blenker's corps was straggling badly. Finally, on the 29th of May, his medical director told him his army needed a whole day's rest.

Lincoln to Frémont, May 26, 1862. W. R. Vol. XII., Part I., p. 647.

Ibid., pp. 12, 13.

He promptly accepted this suggestion, and wasted twenty-four hours in this manner, while Jackson was rushing his ragged troops, who had known no rest for a month, up the narrow valley that formed his only outlet from destruction or captivity. In one day, says Dabney, the Stonewall Brigade marched from Halltown to the neighborhood of Newton, a distance of thirty-five miles; and the Second Virginia accomplished a march of more than forty miles without rations, over muddy roads and amidst continual showers. The race was to the swift. As Frémont's advance entered Strasburg on the 1st of June the rear-guard of Jackson's force was still in sight, leaving the place. The plan of the President, well combined and reasonable as it was, had failed though no fault of his, and Jackson had escaped.

Dabney, p. 388.

It is the contention of General McClellan and his partisans that the plan could not possibly have succeeded. One critic disposes of the matter by a sneer at the thought of trapping "the wily fox, who was master of every gap and gorge in the Valley."

Swinton, "Army of the Potomac," p. 126.

CH. XXII. But an army of sixteen thousand men of all arms is not a fox; it must have roads to cross mountains, and bridges to pass over rivers. If Frémont had obeyed orders and had been where he should have been on
1862. the 30th of May, and if Banks and Saxton had kept a closer watch at Harper's Ferry and followed more immediately upon Jackson's rear, Jackson would have been surrounded at Strasburg by three times his own force, and would have been captured or his army dispersed and destroyed. This would have been richly worth all its cost, and the most captious or malevolent critic would have had nothing to say against the President who ordered it.

There was little prospect of defeating Jackson after he had slipped through the gap between Frémont and McDowell at Strasburg; but nevertheless an energetic pursuit was begun by Frémont up the Shenandoah and by part of Shields's division up the Luray Valley on the east, the former harassing Jackson's rear with almost daily skirmishes, and the latter running a race with him on a parallel line. There was hardly a possibility now of regaining the lost opportunity. No matter how severely pressed, it was almost surely in Jackson's power to escape across Brown's Gap to Albemarle County, where he would for a time be safe from pursuit; and this course, says Dabney, was in his mind as a final resort. But he was not even driven to this. There was one last chance of inflicting great damage upon him. One of Shields's brigades arrived at the bridge at Port Republic before him, and should either have taken and held or destroyed it. The officer in command did neither, and the bridge immediately after fell into Jackson's hands,

Dabney, p. 404.

W. R. Vol. XII., Part I., pp. 22, 24. Part III., p. 375.

giving him command of both sides of the river. The Confederate general and his adjutant and biographer ascribed the capture of this important position to supernatural means. CH. XXII.

> As soon as Jackson uttered his command [to seize the bridge] he drew up his horse, and, dropping the reins upon his neck, raised both his hands towards the heavens, while the fire of battle in his face changed into a look of reverential awe. Even while he prayed, the God of battles heard; or ever he had withdrawn his uplifted hands, the bridge was gained. Dabney, p. 413.

It would perhaps be irreverent to add that the bridge was not defended. On the same day, June 8, he fought a sharp but indecisive battle with Frémont at Cross Keys, and retiring in the night, he attacked and defeated Shields's small detachment at Port Republic. The mismanagement of the Union generals had opposed to him on both days forces greatly inferior to his own. Before these battles were fought the President, seeing that further pursuit was useless, had ordered Shields back to McDowell, Frémont to halt at Harrisonburg for orders, and Banks to guard the posts of Front Royal and Luray. The orders came too late to prevent two unfortunate engagements, but they showed that the civilian at Washington was wiser than the two generals at the front. They both passed thereafter into the ranks of the malcontents — the men with grievances. Shields went back to Washington, where he was received with open arms by the habitual critics of the President. Among them were those of his own household; for we read in Mr. Chase's diary that Shields told him, when he was ordered back, that "Jackson's capture was

W. R. Vol. XII., Part III., p. 354. Part I., pp. 655, 541.

Warden, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 444.

CH. XXII. certain," and the general and the Secretary held harmonious council together over the "terrible mistakes" of the President. This was the last important service of Frémont. He remained in charge of his department a few weeks longer, until he was placed, with others of similar rank, under the general command of Pope. He refused to serve under his junior, and was relieved, not appearing again in any conspicuous position, except for a moment in the summer of 1864, as a candidate for the Presidency in opposition to Mr. Lincoln.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SEVEN DAYS' BATTLES

AFTER the battle of Fair Oaks, as well as before it, General McClellan kept up his continual cry for reënforcements. The hallucination that the enemy's force was double his own had become fixed upon him, and all his plans and combinations were poisoned by this fatal error. The President did everything in his power to satisfy the general's unreasonable demands. He resolved to give him absolute control of all the troops on the Peninsula; and knowing that General Wool would never consent to being placed under McClellan's orders,— that veteran having expressed himself with characteristic severity in regard to his junior's insatiable demand for troops,— the President thought best to remove General Wool to Baltimore, transferring General Dix to Fort Monroe and placing him under the direct command of McClellan — a proceeding which greatly displeased General Dix, but to which he yielded under protest. His displeasure did not interfere with his convictions of duty. Immediately on arriving at Fort Monroe he sent to General McClellan a reënforcement of ten of the best regiments there. No efforts were spared to help and to encourage McClellan; both the President

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 207.

Ibid., p. 221.

CH. XXIII. and the Secretary of War were perpetually sending him kind and complimentary messages in addition to the troops and guns which they gathered in from every quarter for him. A few days after Fair Oaks, in response to his repeated entreaties, McCall's division of McDowell's corps, a splendid body of about ten thousand men, was dispatched to him. He was for the moment delighted at hearing that these troops were coming; and having thus obtained the greater part of McDowell's corps, he said, June 7:

1862.

> I am glad to learn that you are pressing forward reënforcements so vigorously. I shall be in perfect readiness to move forward and take Richmond the moment McCall reaches here and the ground will admit the passage of artillery.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 46.

McCall and his perfectly appointed division of ten thousand men and five batteries of artillery began to arrive on the 11th, and were all present for duty on the 13th; and as if Providence were uniting with the Government to satisfy both the general's requirements, he was able to telegraph on the 12th: "Weather now good. Roads and ground rapidly drying." The weather continued remarkably fine for several days; General Keyes on the 15th reported White Oak Swamp dried up so as to be fordable in many places. But the dry spell did not last, and on the night of the 15th, General McClellan sends to Washington a note of lamentation saying that the rain has begun again, which will "retard our movements somewhat." It is characteristic of him that he always regarded bad weather as exclusively injurious to him, and never to the other side. The President once said of him that he seemed to

Ibid., Part III., p. 225.

Ibid., p. 229.

Ibid.

think, in defiance of Scripture, that Heaven sent its rain only on the just and not on the unjust. To an energetic general all kinds of weather have their uses. Johnston did not allow the terrible storm of May 30 to prevent his attack at Seven Pines; and we have seen how Grant at the very outset of his career, speaking of the bad weather and the wretched roads on which he had to march, said: "This, however, will operate worse upon the enemy . . . than upon us." CH. XXIII. 1862. Ante, p. 105.

It must not be forgotten that, although McClellan and his apologists have been for years denouncing the Government for having withheld from him McDowell's corps, the best part of that corps was actually sent to him. Franklin's magnificent division went to him in April, McCall's equally fine division was dispatched to him before the middle of June. In each case he said he only awaited the coming of that particular division to undertake immediate active operations; and in each case, on the arrival of the eagerly demanded reënforcements, he did nothing but wait the good pleasure of the enemy. His own official reports show that he received by way of reënforcements, after his arrival in the Peninsula and prior to the 15th of June, not less than 39,441 men, of whom there were 32,360 present for duty. Yet all this counted for nothing with him; he let hardly a day pass without clamoring for more. He was not even inclined to allow the Administration any discretion in regard to the manner in which he was to be reënforced. He insisted that McDowell should be sent to him by water, and not by land, so that he should come in by his rear instead of by his right flank; and when 1862. W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 230.

CH. XXIII. he was informed that McCall's force was expected to be restored to McDowell's corps, when that army joined him, he bitterly resented it. He said it did not show a proper spirit in McDowell; and added sullenly, "If I cannot fully control all his troops, I want none of them, but would prefer to fight the battle with what I have, and let others be responsible for the results." These petulant outbursts were met with unwearied patience and kindness on the part of the President. On the 15th of June he wrote:

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 48.

1862.

> The Secretary of War has turned over to me your dispatch about sending McDowell to you by water, instead of by land. I now fear he cannot get to you either way in time. Shields's division has got so terribly out of shape, out at elbows, and out at toes, that it will require a long time to get it in again. I expect to see McDowell within a day or two, when I will again talk with him about the mode of moving. McCall's division has nearly or quite reached you by now. This, with what you get from General Wool's old command, and the new regiments sent you, must give you an increase, since the late battles, of over twenty thousand. Doubtless the battles, and other causes, have decreased you half as much in the same time; but then the enemy have lost as many in the same way. I believe I would come and see you were it not that I fear my presence might divert you and the army from more important matters.

Lincoln, MS.

From this it will be seen that McClellan had no right to delay operations an hour after McCall's arrival from any pretended expectation of the immediate coming of McDowell; and, indeed, he admits in his report[1] that as early as the 7th of

[1] "As I did not think it probable that any reënforcements would be sent me in time for the advance on Richmond, I stated in the foregoing dispatch [of June 7] that I should be ready to move when General McCall's division joined me."—W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 46.

GENERAL SAMUEL P. HEINTZELMAN.

June he had given up any such expectation. With no reason, therefore, for delay, but with every conceivable incentive to action, with an army amounting, after McCall joined him, to the imposing figure of 156,838, of whom an aggregate present of 127,327 is reported by McClellan himself as of the 20th of June, — though he makes a reduction to 114,691 of those "present for duty equipped," — he wasted the month of June in a busy and bustling activity which was in its results equivalent to mere idleness. He was directly invited to attack by the fine weather of the middle of the month, which he describes as "splendid" in a dispatch of the 17th, and by the absence of Stonewall Jackson in the Valley with his 16,000 veterans, reënforced by 10,000 troops from Lee's army, as McClellan himself believed and reported on the 18th. The President, by a dispatch of the same date, urged him to take advantage of this opportunity, saying:

CH. XXIII.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 238.

1862.

Ibid., p. 232.

Ibid.

> If this is true, it is as good as a reënforcement to you of an equal force. I could better dispose of things if I could know about what day you can attack Richmond, and would be glad to be informed, if you think you can inform me with safety.

Ibid., p. 233.

The terms in which General McClellan answered this inquiry are worthy of quotation as an illustration of that air of energy and determination which he so often introduced into the expression of his intentions, while leaving, as in the last lines of this dispatch, a loophole for indefinite delay:

> Our army is well over the Chickahominy, except the very considerable forces necessary to protect our flanks and communications. Our whole line of pickets in front runs within six miles of Richmond. The rebel line runs

Ch. XXIII. within musket range of ours. Each has heavy support at hand. A general engagement may take place any hour. An advance by us involves a battle more or less decisive. The enemy exhibit at every point a readiness to meet us. They certainly have great numbers and extensive works. If 10,000 or 15,000 men have left Richmond to reënforce Jackson, it illustrates their strength and confidence.

This is a singularly characteristic view. The fact of a large detachment having left Lee affords him no encouragement; it simply impresses him all the more with the idea of his enemy's strength.

After to-morrow we shall fight the rebel army as soon as Providence will permit. We shall await only a favorable condition of the earth and sky, and the completion of some necessary preliminaries.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 233.

As usual, it was the enemy that startled McClellan out of his procrastination. On the 13th of June, General J. E. B. Stuart, with some twelve hundred Confederate cavalry and a few guns, started to ride around McClellan's army; touching on his way the South Anna Railroad bridge, Hanover Court House, Tunstall's Station on the York River Railway, and thence to Jones's Bridge on the Chickahominy, which he stopped to repair, crossing it on the 15th, and entering Richmond by the river road the next day. It has rarely been the fortune of a general to inflict such an insult upon an opponent without injury. General McClellan did not seem to feel that any discredit attached to him for this performance. On the contrary he congratulated himself that Stuart had done so little harm.

June, 1862.

The burning of two schooners laden with forage, and fourteen Government wagons, the destruction of some

sutlers' stores, the killing of several of the guard and teamsters at Garlick's Landing, some little damage done at Tunstall's Station, and a little *éclat*, were the precise results of this expedition. CH. XXIII. W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 47.

McClellan had for some time been vaguely meditating a change of base to the James River, and this raid of Stuart seems to have somewhat strengthened this purpose. Fitz-John Porter, who more than any other possessed his confidence, says that McClellan desired to effect this movement as soon as he gave up looking for McDowell to join him, which, we have seen from his report, was in the first week of June. "As early as June 18," Porter says, he "sent vessels loaded with supplies to the James River." It is not intended to intimate that he was fully resolved upon this course; but he appears to have kept it constantly before him, in his undecided, irresolute way, all through the month. His communication with Commodore John Rodgers, who commanded on the James, indicates a purpose to move to some point on that river. He says on the 24th: "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War." Vol. II., p. 325. June, 1862.

> In a few days I hope to gain such a position as to enable me to place a force above Ball's and Drewry's bluffs, so that we can remove the obstructions and place ourselves in communication with you so that you can coöperate in the final attack. In the mean time please keep some gunboats as near Drewry's Bluff as prudence will permit. W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 250.

On the 25th he pushed forward his picket line in front of Seven Pines to within four miles of Richmond, a point farther in advance than he had yet reached. At the same time he issued orders to his corps commanders south of the river that they were not to regard these new positions as their

Ch. XXIII. field of battle, but were to fall back, if attacked, to their old intrenchments. He had by this time heard of the arrival of Jackson's corps, and also credited a false and impossible rumor of the arrival of Beauregard and his troops from the West. He was fully informed of the attack threatened within a few hours, and yet he sent to Washington for more troops. "If I had another good division I could laugh at Jackson," he said, while he knew that Jackson was marching upon his right. He made his usual complaint and threat of putting the responsibility where it belonged. These wanton accusations at such a time moved the President, not to anger, but to genuine sorrow. Yet he answered with almost incredible patience:

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 252.

Ibid., p. 253.

Ibid., p. 254.

> Your three dispatches of yesterday in relation to the affair, ending with the statement that you completely succeeded in making your point, are very gratifying. The later one . . . suggesting the probability of your being overwhelmed by 200,000, and talking of where the responsibility will belong, pains me very much. I give you all I can, and act on the presumption that you will do the best you can with what you have, while you continue, ungenerously I think, to assume that I could give you more if I would. I have omitted, and shall omit, no opportunity to send you reënforcements whenever I possibly can.

Lincoln to McClellan, June 26, 1862.

Ibid., p. 259.

1862. It is impossible to say how long his desultory preparations would have lasted if General McClellan had been left to himself; but after the 23d of June, the power of deciding upon what day he should attack had already passed out of his hands. General Lee had made, at his leisure, all his arrangements for attacking the Union army, and had chosen the time and the manner of onset,— as Johnston did a

month before,— without the slightest reference to any possible initiative of McClellan. He had, during the month allowed him by the inactivity of his opponent, brought together from every available source a great army, almost equal in numbers to the Army of the Potomac. Though there is a great disparity in the accounts of the different Confederate officers who have written upon this subject, there is no reason to doubt that the official estimate quoted with approval by General Webb, which states Lee's force as 80,762, is substantially correct. Webb says that McClellan's effective force for the "seven days' battles" was 92,500 — considerably less than his own official report of the 20th of June gives him, which, exclusive of Dix's force, was 105,445. The Confederate forces were, like the army opposed to them, of the best material the country could furnish; and no better men ever went to war, in any age or region. It is an unsolved and now an insolvable question whether the Confederates had gained or lost by the wounding of Johnston and the substitution of Lee as the commander of their principal army. They were both men of the best ability and highest character that the Southern States could produce; both trained soldiers, of calm temper and great energy; and both equally honorable and magnanimous in their treatment of their subordinates. But General Lee had a great advantage over his predecessor in possessing the perfect confidence and personal friendship of Jefferson Davis, the head of the Confederate Government. He was always sure in his enterprises of what Johnston often lacked, the sincere and zealous support of the Richmond Government. He

Webb, "The Peninsula," pp. 119, 120.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 238.

CH. XXIII. also enjoyed, to an unusual degree, the warm regard and esteem of those who were brought into personal or official relations with him. His handsome and attractive presence, his dignified yet cordial manner, a certain sincerity and gentleness which was apparent in all his words and actions, endeared him to his associates and made friends of strangers at first sight. Everything he asked for was given him. He had been the favorite of General Scott in the old army; he became the favorite of Mr. Davis in his new command. The army which Johnston gave up to him had been almost doubled in numbers by the time he considered himself ready to employ it against McClellan.

Johnston, "Narrative," pp. 145, 146.

Lee's preparations were promptly and energetically made. Immediately after Stuart's raid was completed he ordered Stonewall Jackson to join him by a letter of the 16th, which gave minute instructions for his march and enjoined upon him the greatest secrecy and swiftness. To mask this movement he ostentatiously sent Jackson two brigades from Richmond, with drums beating and colors flying, a proceeding which was promptly reported to McClellan and caused him at first some perplexity, but which he explained by his usual conclusion that Lee had so overwhelming a force that a few brigades here or there made no difference to him. The manœuvre was of little practical account, however, as McClellan was fully informed of Jackson's approach in time to provide against it, or to anticipate his arrival by taking the offensive. He even knew as early as the 25th that Jackson was to come in on his right and rear, but he made no use of this knowledge except to reproach the

June, 1862.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 602.

Davis, "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government." Vol. II., p. 133.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 233.

Ibid., p. 254.

Government for not sending him more troops. Jackson reported at Richmond in person on the 23d of June, in advance of his corps; and in a conference with Longstreet and the two Hills the plan of attacking the Federal right wing, north of the Chickahominy, was agreed upon. As Jackson's troops had the greatest distance to march, it was left to him to say when the attack should be made. He named the morning of the 26th of June, giving himself, as it afterwards appeared, too little time. CH. XXIII. 1862.

General Lee matured his plan on the 24th, and issued his orders for the coming campaign. The most striking thing about them is his evident contempt for his opponent. He sent, in effect, full two-thirds of his army to the north side of the Chickahominy to strike McClellan's right wing. The enemy is to be "driven from Mechanicsville"; the Confederates are to "sweep down the Chickahominy and endeavor to drive the enemy from his position above New Bridge; General Jackson bearing well to his left, turning Beaver Dam Creek, and taking the direction towards Cold Harbor. They will then press forward towards the York River Railroad, closing upon the enemy's rear, and forcing him down the Chickahominy. Any advance of the enemy towards Richmond will be prevented by vigorously following his rear, and crippling and arresting his progress." He anticipated the possibility of McClellan's abandoning his intrenchments on the south side of the river, in which case he is to be "closely pursued" by Huger and Magruder. Cavalry were to occupy the roads to arrest his flight "down the Chickahominy." General Lee's plan and expectation was, in short, W. R. Vol. XI., Part II., pp. 498, 499.

CH. XXIII. to herd and drive down the Peninsula a magnificent army, superior in numbers to his own, and not inferior in any other respect — if we except the respective generals-commanding, who were at least equally distinguished engineers. In this enterprise he deserved and courted defeat by leaving the bulk of McClellan's army between himself and Richmond. When he laid his plan before Jefferson Davis, the latter saw at once this serious defect in it. He says:

> I pointed out to him that our force and intrenched line between that left flank [of the enemy] and Richmond was too weak for a protracted resistance, and if McClellan was the man I took him for, . . . as soon as he found that the bulk of our army was on the north side of the Chickahominy he would not stop to try conclusions with it there, but would immediately move upon his objective point, the city of Richmond. If, on the other hand, he should behave like an engineer officer, and deem it his first duty to protect his line of communication, I thought the plan proposed was not only the best, but would be a success. Something of his old *esprit de corps* manifested itself in General Lee's first response that he did not know engineer officers were more likely than others to make such mistakes, but immediately passing to the main subject, he added, "If you will hold him as long as you can at the intrenchments, and then fall back on the detached works around the city, I will be upon the enemy's heels before he gets there."

Davis, "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government." Vol. II., p. 132.

But everything shows he anticipated no such action on the part of McClellan. All his orders, all his dispositions, indicate clearly that he thought of nothing but driving him down the Chickahominy towards Yorktown, and capturing or dispersing his army. The measure of success he met with will always be, in the general judgment, a justifica-

tion of his plan; but the opinion of the best military critics on both sides is that it never could have succeeded had it not been for McClellan's hallucination as to the numbers opposed to him. From the hour that Lee crossed his troops over the Chickahominy, leaving that river and McClellan's army between him and Richmond, he risked the fate of the Confederacy upon his belief that the Union general would make no forward movement. His confidence grew with every step of McClellan's retreat from Beaver Dam Creek to Malvern Hill, and was dearly paid for in the blood of his soldiers. CH. XXIII.

The first meeting between the two armies resulted in a terrible defeat for the Confederates. About three o'clock on the afternoon of the 26th, June, 1862 the rebel forces, commanded by Longstreet, D. H. Hill, and A. P. Hill, attacked the Union troops in position on the east side of Beaver Dam Creek, commanded by General McCall, whose division had been added to Fitz-John Porter's corps. McCall's brigade commanders were Truman Seymour, Meade, and John F. Reynolds. Of the last two, the one gained an undying fame and the other a glorious death at Gettysburg. The Confederates were in greatly superior force, but the Union troops had the advantage of position; and though both sides fought with equal valor, before night fell the rebels were repulsed with great slaughter. General McClellan visited Fitz-John Porter's headquarters at night, after the battle. He found an exultant and victorious army, almost unscathed by the fierce conflict of the day. Porter reports his loss at 250 out of the 5000 engaged, and says the enemy lost nearly 2000 of their 10,000 attacking. If Por- "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War." Vol. II., p. 331.

CH. XXIII. ter, instead of McClellan, had been in command of the army, Richmond might have been under the Union flag the next day. His soldierly spirit, flushed with the day's success, comprehended the full advantage of the situation. He urged McClellan to seize his opportunity; he proposed "to hold his own at the Beaver Dam line, slightly reënforced, while General McClellan moved the main body of the army upon Richmond."[1] The general commanding had not resolution enough to accept or reject this proposition of his gallant subordinate. He returned to his own headquarters to make up his mind, and about "three or four o'clock in the morning" sent his final order to Porter to retire to a position some four miles east, behind Boatswain Swamp, and there await the further attack of the enemy.

General Porter's personal devotion to McClellan, which was afterwards to bring him into lifelong trouble, has never allowed him to criticize this decision of his chief which overruled his own bold and intelligent plan. Let us see how the ablest and most efficient Confederate general engaged in this campaign regarded it. General Longstreet says:

> In my judgment the evacuation of Beaver Dam Creek was very unwise on the part of the Federal commanders. We had attacked at Beaver Dam, and had failed to make an impression at that point, losing several thousand men and officers. This demonstrated that the position was safe. If the Federal commanders knew of Jackson's approach on the 26th, they had ample time to reënforce Porter's right before Friday morning (27th), with men

[1] We are here quoting the language of General Webb, whose testimony is beyond question.—Webb, "The Peninsula," p. 130.

and field defenses, to such extent as to make the remainder of the line to the right secure against assault. So that the Federals in withdrawing not only abandoned a strong position, but gave up the *morale* of their success, and transferred it to our somewhat disheartened forces; for, next to Malvern Hill, the sacrifice at Beaver Dam was unequaled in demoralization during the entire summer. CH. XXIII. "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," Vol. II., p. 398.

It is hard to understand what General McClellan means when he says in his report that the 26th was "the day upon which I had decided as the time for our final advance." If he thought it safe to attack Richmond with Lee and his army in front of him, how much more advantageous would such an attack have been with Lee and two-thirds of his army engaged in a desperate battle north of the Chickahominy. There is no indication in his orders or dispatches of these days — if we except one order to Porter, hereafter to be mentioned — that he had any more definite purpose than to await the action of the enemy, and retreat to the James if necessary. His mind was filled with the idea of an army of 200,000 under Lee. In his report, written a year afterwards, he reiterates and dwells upon this already disproved fiction, basing his persistent belief on the reports of his detective service. This is the only explanation possible of his action during this momentous week, while he was flying from myriads which existed only in his own brain, and his brave army was turning and checking Lee's pursuing forces at every halt it made. W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 51. Ibid.

On the morning of the 27th Porter withdrew to his new position, famous ever thereafter as the battlefield of Gaines's Mill, or of the Chickahominy, as it is called by Southern writers. His ground, June, 1862.

CH. XXIII. like that of the day before, was admirably chosen for defense. He had less than one-third the number of the host which was marching by every road on the west and north to destroy him.[1] He knew his force was too small to defend so long a line against such numbers, but his appeals to McClellan for reenforcements brought no response until late in the day, when Slocum's division was sent him. With the troops he had he made a magnificent fight, which makes us speculate on what might have happened if he had commanded the entire Army of the Potomac on that day.

With the exception of the nine brigades left on the south side of the river under Magruder and Huger to hold McClellan, the whole army of General Lee, numbering over sixty thousand men, was advancing upon Porter's single corps. It was led by the best generals of the South—Longstreet, the two Hills, Whiting, Hood, Ewell, and the redoubtable Jackson, whose corps, though marching with less than their usual celerity, had turned Beaver Dam Creek the night before, and had now arrived at the post assigned them opposite Porter's right. General Lee commanded on the field in person, and Jefferson Davis contributed whatever his presence was worth.

The battle began at noon, and as evening fell upon the desperately fought field, the entire Confederate army, by a simultaneous advance, forced back the Union troops, overcome by numbers and

[1] Porter's force consisted of Morell's, McCall's, and Sykes's divisions; "in all, 17,330 infantry for duty. There were present with him 2534 artillery, of which, from the nature of the ground, but a very small portion could be used"; and 671 of the regular cavalry guarded the bridges.—Webb, "The Peninsula," p. 129.

wearied with seven hours of constant fighting.[1] There was no confusion except at the point on the right where Morell's line had been pierced by Hood's brigade, where two regiments were made prisoner. Everywhere else the Union soldiers retired fighting, turning from time to time to beat back the enemy, until night put an end to the conflict. Porter had lost four thousand in killed and wounded — one-sixth of his men; Lee something more, about one-twelfth of his. The loss in missing was much larger on the Union side than on the Confederate. Lee had absolutely failed in his object — to dislodge the Union army from its position and "drive it down the Chickahominy." CH. XXIII.

Of the heroic valor of this sanguinary day's work there can be no question. There is much question of the wisdom of it. If McClellan had made up his mind to retreat to the James, he might have withdrawn Porter to the south side of the Chickahominy during the night of the 26th, after his signal victory at Beaver Dam.[2] But, as we have seen, he

[1] Porter says: "The forces in this battle were: Union, 50 regiments, 20 batteries (several not engaged); in all, about 30,000 fighting men [including the reënforcements received during the day]. Confederate, 129 regiments, 19 batteries; in all, about 65,000."

[2] "At last a moment came when action was imperative. The enemy assumed the initiative, and we had warning of when and where he was to strike. Had Porter been withdrawn the night of the 26th, our army would have been concentrated on the right bank, while two corps at least of the enemy's force were on the left bank. Whatever course we then took, whether to strike at Richmond and the portion of the enemy on the right bank, or move at once for the James, we would have had a concentrated army and a fair chance of a brilliant result in the first place, and in the second, if we accomplished nothing, we would have been in the same case on the morning of the 27th as we were on that of the 28th, minus a lost battle and a compulsory retreat; or, had the fortified lines (thrown up expressly for that object) been held by 20,000 men (as they could

"Battles and Leaders." Vol. II., p. 337.

CH. XXIII. gave no definite orders until three o'clock the next morning, when he directed Porter to retire to Gaines's Mill. During all the terrible conflict of the 27th, he left his gallant subordinate to fight his force, with no intimation of his ultimate purpose. Porter had a right to think that the price of his tremendous sacrifice was to be the capture of Richmond. McClellan's orders to him on the 23d included these words:

> The troops on this side will be held ready either to support you directly or to attack the enemy in their front. If the force attacking you is large, the general would prefer the latter course, counting upon your skill and the admirable troops under your command to hold their own against superior numbers long enough for him to make the decisive movement which will determine the fate of Richmond.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 247.

In addition to this we have the most unimpeachable authority for saying that Porter on the battle-field was left with the same impression. General Webb, who was present with General Porter during the fight, ordered to that duty from McClellan's headquarters, says he "carried with him to General Porter the distinct impression then prevailing at the headquarters of the army, that he was to hold this large force of the enemy on the left bank of the Chickahominy in order that General McClellan, with the main army, might break through and take Richmond."

Webb, "The Peninsula," p. 187.

have been), we could have fought on the other side with 80,000 men instead of 27,000; or, finally, had the lines been abandoned, with our hold on the right bank of the Chickahominy, we might have fought and crushed the enemy on the left bank, reopened our communications, and then returned and taken Richmond."—Report of General Barnard, Chief of Engineers, Army of the Potomac. W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 131.

It was this inspiring thought which moved Porter and his men to such a prodigious feat of arms. General Webb says: CH. XXIII.

> The sacrifice at Gaines's Mill . . . was warranted, if we were to gain Richmond by making it, and the troops engaged in carrying out this plan, conceiving it to be the wish of the general commanding, were successful in holding the rebels on the left bank.

Webb, "The Peninsula," p. 187.

But the general commanding was incapable of the effort of will necessary to carry out his share of the plan. He gives us to understand, in his report and in subsequent articles, that he resolved upon his retreat to the James on the 25th of June. General Webb adopts this theory, and adds that McClellan thought that the capture of Richmond, with Lee beyond the Chickahominy, was not a proper military movement. It is not in the competence of any one to judge what were General McClellan's thoughts and intentions from the 23d to the 27th of June. So late as eight o'clock on the night of the 27th a dispatch from him to the War Department indicates that he thought the attack of Magruder on the right bank was more serious than that upon Porter on the left. "I may be forced," he says, "to give up my position during the night, but will not if it is possible to avoid it"; and as a matter of course the usual refrain follows: "Had I twenty thousand fresh and good troops, we would be sure of a splendid victory to-morrow." Magruder, who had been left to guard Richmond with only twenty-five thousand troops, had been all day repeating the devices which were so successful at Yorktown. He had rattled about McClellan's entire front with so much noise and smoke as to create the

1862.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 266.

CH. XXIII. impression of overwhelming numbers. Even the seasoned corps commanders were not unaffected by it. Franklin thought it not prudent to send any reënforcements from his line to Porter. Sumner offered to send two brigades, but thought it would be hazardous. The real state of the case can best be seen from Magruder's own report. He says:

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 59.

> From Friday night until Sunday morning I considered the situation of our army as extremely critical and perilous. The larger portion of it was on the opposite side of the Chickahominy. The bridges had been all destroyed, but one was rebuilt (the New Bridge), which was commanded fully by the enemy's guns from Golding's, and there were but 25,000 men between his army of 100,000 and Richmond. . . Had McClellan massed his whole force in column, and advanced it against any point of our line of battle, as was done at Austerlitz, under similar circumstances, by the greatest captain of any age, though the head of his column would have suffered greatly, its momentum would have insured him success and the occupation of our works about Richmond, and consequently the city, might have been his reward. His failure to do so is the best evidence that our wise commander fully understood the character of his opponent.

Ibid., Part II., p. 662.

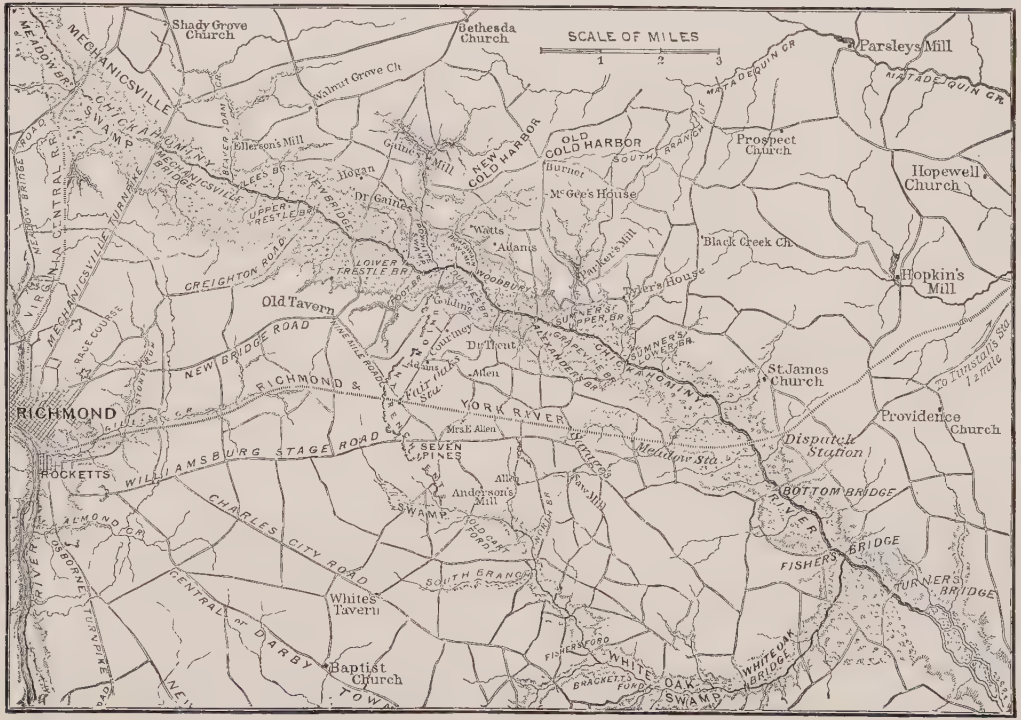
D. H. Hill says the same thing:

"Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," Vol. II., p. 361.

> During Lee's absence Richmond was at the mercy of McClellan. . . The fortifications around Richmond at that time were very slight. McClellan could have captured the city with very little loss of life. The want of supplies would have forced Lee to attack him as soon as possible, with all the disadvantages of a precipitated movement.[1]

[1] The following shows the opinion of two of the most prominent Confederate officers upon this matter. It is an extract from a letter of General J. E. Johnston to General Beauregard, dated Amelia Springs, August 4, 1862, shortly after the Seven Days' Battles:

"But for my confidence in McClellan's want of enterprise, I should on Thursday night, after



REGION OF THE SEVEN DAYS' FIGHTING.— PART I.

NOTE: For Part II. see page 448.

General McClellan did not visit the field of battle during the day.[1] At night he summoned Porter across the river, and there made known to him and the other corps commanders, for the first time, his intention to change his base to the James. Porter was ordered to retire to the south bank, and destroy the bridges after him. This was accomplished safely and in good order, and the bridges were destroyed soon after sunrise on the 28th. The movement to the James once resolved upon, it was executed with great energy and ability. General Keyes moved his corps, with artillery and baggage, across the White Oak Swamp, and possessed himself of the ground on the other side, for the covering of the passage of the other troops and the trains, by noon of the 28th. General Porter's corps, during the same day and night, crossed the White Oak Swamp, and established itself in positions that covered the roads from Richmond. Franklin withdrew from the extreme right after a skirmish at Golding's Farm. Keyes and Porter continued in the advance, and established their two corps safely at Malvern Hill, thus securing the extreme left flank of the army in a commanding and important situation.

CH. XXIII.

June, 1862.

three-fourths of the troops had crossed the Chickahominy, have apprehended that he would adopt the course you suggest for him. Had he done so, he might have been in Richmond on Friday before midday. By concentrating his troops on the south side of the river before daybreak on Friday he would have been between our main body and the city, with only one-fourth of our force in his way. This fraction he could have beaten in four hours, and marched to Richmond in two hours more." — Published in the "New-York Times," June 17, 1883.

1 "*Question.* Were you with the right or left wing of the army during the battle of Gaines's Mill?

"*Answer.* [General McClellan.] I was on the right bank of the river, at Dr. Trent's house, as the most central position."

Report of the Committee on Conduct of the War.

CH. XXIII

This movement took General Lee completely by surprise. Anticipating nothing but a retreat down the Chickahominy,[1] he had thrown his left wing and his entire cavalry force in that direction; when he became aware of his mistake, a good deal of precious time was already lost, and he was deprived, during the three days that followed, of Stuart's invaluable services. But on the 29th, having ascertained that McClellan was marching to the James, he immediately started in pursuit, sending his whole force by parallel roads to intercept the Army of the Potomac near Charles City Cross-roads, midway between the White Oak Swamp and the James. Longstreet was to march with A. P. Hill by the Long Bridge road; while Huger was to come up at the same time by the Charles City road, and General Holmes was to take up position below him on the river road. Jackson, crossing the Grape-vine Bridge, was to come in from the north on the rear of the Federal army.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part II., p. 494.

June, 1862.

Even the terrible lessons of Beaver Dam and Gaines's Mill had not convinced General Lee of the danger of attacking the Army of the Potomac in position. These lessons were repeated all along the line of march. Sumner repulsed Magruder at Allen's Farm, and then, retiring to Savage's Station, he and Franklin met another fierce onslaught from the same force, and completely defeated them. It was with the greatest difficulty that Franklin could

[1] "General Lee, presuming that the Federalists would continue to withdraw, if overpowered, toward the York River Railroad and the White House, directed General Jackson to proceed with General D. H. Hill to a point a few miles north of Cold Harbor, and thence to march to that place and strike their line of retreat." — Dabney, "Life of Gen. T. J. Jackson," p. 443.

induce the gallant old general to leave the field. McClellan's orders were positive that the White Oak Swamp must be crossed that night; but to all Franklin's representations Sumner answered, "No, General, you shall not go, nor will I." When shown McClellan's positive orders, he cried out, "McClellan did not know the circumstances when he wrote that note. He did not know that we would fight a battle and gain a victory." He only gave way and reluctantly took up his line of march for the southward on the positive orders of an aide-de-camp, who had just left McClellan.[1]

"Battles and Leaders of the Civil War." Vol. II., p. 375.

The next day occurred the battle of Glendale, or Frayser's Farm, as it is sometimes called. Jackson, with unusual slowness, had arrived at Savage's Station the day before, too late to take part in the battle there; and when he came to White Oak Swamp the bridge was gone, and Franklin occupied the heights beyond. His force was therefore neutralized during the day. He made once or twice a feeble attempt to cross the swamp, but was promptly met and driven back by Franklin. Huger, on the Charles City road, failed to break through some slight obstruction there. Holmes was in terror of the gunboats near Malvern Hill, and could give no assistance; so that Longstreet and A. P. Hill were forced to attack the Union center, at Glendale, on pretty nearly even terms.

June 30, 1862.

[1] The corps commanders in these battles were left almost entirely without directions, as the following shows:

"*Question.* By whom was the battle of Savage's Station fought? Did you yourself direct the movements of the troops, or were they directed by the corps commanders?

"*Answer.* [General McClellan.] I had given general orders for the movements of the troops, but the fighting was done under the direct orders of the corps commanders."

Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. Part I., p. 436.

CH. XXIII. Here a savage and obstinate conflict took place, which was felt on both sides to be the crisis of the campaign. If the Union center had been pierced, the disaster would have been beyond calculation. On the other hand, if our army had been concentrated at that point, and had defeated the army of Lee, the city of Richmond would have been the prize of victory. General Franklin says that the Prince de Joinville, who was at that moment taking leave of the army to return to Europe, said to him with great earnestness, "Advise General McClellan to center his army at this point and fight the battle to-day. If he does, he will be in Richmond to-morrow." Neither side won the victory that day, though each deserved it by brave and persistent fighting. General McClellan, intent upon searching for a defensive position for his army upon the James, left the field before the conflict began; while Longstreet, Lee, and Jefferson Davis himself, were under the fire of the Union guns during the afternoon. When darkness put an end to the fighting, the Federal generals, left to their discretion, had accomplished their purpose. The enemy had been held in check, the trains and artillery had gone safely forward by the road which the battle had protected, and on the next morning, July 1, the Army of the Potomac was awaiting its enemy in the natural fortress of Malvern Hill. It was at this place that General Lee's contempt for his enemy was to meet its last and severest chastisement.

"Battles and Leaders," Vol. II., p. 382.

The position strikingly resembled the battlefield of Gaines's Mill. The Union army was posted on a high position, in lines selected and established by

General Humphreys, covered on the right and on the left by swampy streams and winding ravines. Woods in front furnished a cover for the formation of the Confederate columns, but an open space intervening afforded full play for the terrible Federal artillery. It was not the place for a prudent general to attack, and Lee was usually one of the most prudent of generals. But he had his whole army well in hand, Jackson having come up in the night, and he decided to risk the venture. D. H. Hill took the liberty of representing the great strength of McClellan's position, and to give his opinion against an assault. Longstreet, who was present, laughed and said, "Don't get scared, now that we have got him whipped." "It was this belief in the demoralization of the Federal army," Hill says, "that made our leader risk the attack." Lee evidently thought the position could be carried by a *coup de main*. The order to his generals of division is a curiosity of military literature: "Batteries have been established to rake the enemy's line. If it is broken, as is probable, Armistead, who can witness the effect of the fire, has been ordered to charge with a yell. Do the same."

CH. XXIII.

"Battles and Leaders," Vol. II., p. 391.

Ibid., p. 392

On the part of the Confederates the battle was as ill executed as it was ill conceived. There was a vast amount of blood and valor wasted by them; while on the Union side, under the admirable leadership of Porter, Morell, and Couch, not a drop of blood nor an ounce of powder was thrown away. Successive attacks made by the Confederates from one o'clock until nine were promptly and bravely repulsed by the Union soldiers. Jackson's forces suffered severely in getting into position early in the

CH. XXIII. afternoon. One of Huger's brigades charged upon Couch about three o'clock, and was driven back, roughly handled. D. H. Hill waited a long time for the "yell" from Armistead, which was to be his signal for onset. But Armistead's yell in that roar of artillery was but a feeble pipe, and was soon silenced; and when Hill at last heard some shouting on his right, and concluded to advance, he was repulsed and fearfully punished by the immovable brigades of Couch and Heintzelman. The most picturesque, perhaps we may say the most sensational, charge of the day was that made by Magruder late in the afternoon. His nine brigades melted away like men of snow under the frightful fire of Sykes's batteries and the muskets of Morell's steadfast infantry. This charge closed the fighting for the day. The Union line had not been broken.

"Battles and Leaders." Vol. II., p. 393.

July 1, 1862. One remarkable feature of the battle of Malvern Hill was that neither of the generals commanding exercised any definite control over the progress of the fight. General Lee, it is true, was on the field, accompanied by Jefferson Davis; but with the exception of that preposterous order about Armistead's yell, he seems to have allowed his corps commanders to fight the battle in their own way. Their reports are filled with angry recriminations, and show a gross lack of discipline and organization. Early in the afternoon Lee ordered Longstreet and Hill to move their forces by the left flank, intending to cut off the expected retreat of McClellan. Longstreet says: "I issued my orders accordingly for the two division commanders to go around and turn the Federal right, when, in some way unknown to me, the battle was drawn on.

Ibid., p. 403.

We were repulsed at all points with fearful slaughter, losing six thousand men and accomplishing nothing." CH. XXIII.

General McClellan left the field in the morning before the fighting began, and went to his camp at Haxall's, which was under the protection of the gunboats. He came back for a little while in the afternoon, but remained with the right wing, where there was no fighting; he said his anxiety was for the right wing, as he was perfectly sure of the left and the center. In this way he deprived himself of the pleasure of witnessing a great victory won by the troops under the command of his subordinate generals. It is not impossible that if he had seen with his own eyes the magnificent success of the Union arms during the day he would have held the ground which had been so gallantly defended. To judge from the accounts of the officers on both sides, nothing would have been easier. The defeat and consequent demoralization of the Confederate forces surpassed anything seen in the war, and it might have been completed by a vigorous offensive on the morning of the 2d. Even Major Dabney, of Jackson's staff, whose sturdy partisanship usually refuses to recognize the plainest facts unfavorable to his side, gives this picture of the feeling of the division commanders of Jackson's corps the night of the battle: "After many details of losses and disasters, they all concurred in declaring that McClellan would probably take the aggressive in the morning, and that the Confederate army was in no condition to resist him."

Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. Part I., pp. 436, 437.

July, 1862.

Dabney, p. 473.

But, impressed by the phantasm of two hundred thousand men before him, McClellan had already

CH. XXIII. resolved to retire still farther down the James to Harrison's Landing, in order, as he says, to reach a point where his supplies could be brought to him with certainty. Commodore Rodgers, with whom he was in constant consultation, thought this could best be done below City Point. The victorious army, therefore, following the habit of the disastrous week, turned its back once more upon its beaten enemy, and established itself that day at Harrison's Bar, in a situation which Lee, having at last gained some information as to the fighting qualities of the Army of the Potomac, declined to attack, a decision in which Jackson — half of whose men were out of their ranks by death, wounds, or straggling — agreed with him. After several days of reconnaissance he withdrew his army, on the 8th of July, to Richmond, and the Peninsular Campaign was at an end.

Dabney, p. 477.

1862.

CHAPTER XXIV

HARRISON'S LANDING

CH. XXIV.

GENERAL McCLELLAN was greatly agitated by the battle of Gaines's Mill,[1] and by the emotions incident to his forced departure for the James. Under the influence of this feeling he sent to the Secretary of War, from Savage's Station, on the 28th of June, an extraordinary dispatch, which we here insert in full, as it seems necessary to the comprehension of his attitude towards, and his relations with, the Government:

1862.

I now know the full history of the day. On this side of the river (the right bank) we repulsed several strong attacks. On the left bank our men did all that men could

[1] Lieutenant-Colonel B. S. Alexander, of the Corps of Engineers, gave the following sworn evidence before the Committee on the Conduct of the War [p. 592]. He said he saw, on the evening of the 28th, at General McClellan's headquarters at Savage's Station, an order directing the destruction of the baggage of the officers and men, and he thought also the camp equipage; appealing to the officers and men to submit to this privation because it would be only for a few days, he thought the order stated. He went to the general at once, and remonstrated with him against allowing any such order to be issued, telling him he thought it would have a bad effect upon the army — would demoralize the officers and men; that it would tell them more plainly than in any other way that they were a defeated army running for their lives. This led to some discussion among the officers at headquarters, and Colonel Alexander heard afterward that the order was never promulgated, but suppressed. Brevet Brigadier-General James F. Rusling informs us that he saw and read this order, and that it was issued and acted upon to a certain extent. MS. letter.

CH. XXIV. do, all that soldiers could accomplish; but they were overwhelmed by vastly superior numbers, even after I brought my last reserves into action. The loss on both sides is terrible. I believe it will prove to be the most desperate battle of the war. The sad remnants of my men behave as men. Those battalions who fought most bravely, and suffered most, are still in the best order. My regulars were superb, and I count upon what are left to turn another battle, in company with their gallant comrades of the volunteers. Had I 20,000 or even 10,000 fresh troops to use to-morrow, I could take Richmond, but I have not a man in reserve, and shall be glad to cover my retreat, and save the material and personnel of the army. If we have lost the day, we have yet preserved our honor, and no one need blush for the Army of the Potomac. I have lost this battle because my force was too small. I again repeat that I am not responsible for this, and I say it with the earnestness of a general who feels in his heart the loss of every brave man who has been needlessly sacrificed to-day. I still hope to retrieve our fortunes, but to do this the Government must view the matter in the same earnest light that I do. You must send me very large reënforcements, and send them at once. I shall draw back to this side of Chickahominy, and think I can withdraw all our material. Please understand that in this battle we have lost nothing but men, and those the best we have. In addition to what I have already said, I only wish to say to the President that I think he is wrong in regarding me as ungenerous when I said that my force was too weak. I merely intimated a truth which to-day has been too plainly proved. If, at this instant, I could dispose of ten thousand fresh men, I could gain a victory to-morrow. I know that a few thousand more men would have changed this battle from a defeat to a victory. As it is, the Government must not and can not hold me responsible for the result. I feel too earnestly to-night; I have seen too many dead and wounded comrades to feel otherwise than that the Government has not sustained this army. If you do not do so now, the game is lost. If I save this army now, I tell you plainly that I owe no thanks to you or to any other persons in Washington. You have done your best to sacrifice this army.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 61.

It is probable that no other general would have retained his commission for twenty-four hours after the receipt of such a communication by his superiors; but it is easy to see the reason why he was never called to account for it. The evident panic and mental perturbation which pierced through its incoherence filled the President with such dismay that its mutinous insolence was entirely overlooked. He could only wonder what terrible catastrophe, already accomplished or to come, could have wrung such an outcry as this from the general commanding. Even the surrender of the army was not an impossible disaster to expect from a general capable of writing such a dispatch. Secretary Chase has left a memorandum showing that some such action was regarded as indicated by General McClellan's telegrams, and that even after his arrival at Harrison's Landing, General Marcy, his father-in-law and chief-of-staff, in a visit to Washington, spoke of it as a possibility.[1] Not knowing the extent of the mischance which had fallen upon the army, the President hastened at once to send a kind and encouraging answer to McClellan's dispatches:

Save your army at all events. Will send reënforcements as fast as we can. Of course they cannot reach you to-day, to-morrow, or next day. I have not said you were ungenerous for saying you needed reënforcements. I thought you were ungenerous in assuming that I did not send them as fast as I could. I feel any misfortune to

[1] This is the language of Mr. Chase's memorandum: "General McClellan himself, in his dispatches before reaching Harrison's Landing, referred to the possibility of being obliged to capitulate with his entire army; and after reaching that place, General Marcy, . . . who had been sent up to explain personally the situation to the President, spoke of the possibility of his capitulation at once, or within two or three days."—Schuckers, "Life of S. P. Chase," p. 447.

CH. XXIV.

you and your army quite as keenly as you feel it yourself. If you have had a drawn battle, or a repulse, it is the price we pay for the enemy not being in Washington. We protected Washington, and the enemy concentrated on you. Had we stripped Washington, he would have been upon us before the troops could have gotten to you. Less than a week ago you notified us that reënforcements were leaving Richmond to come in front of us. It is the nature of the case, and neither you nor the Government are to blame. Please tell at once the present condition and aspect of things.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 269.

The President also, with the greatest diligence, sent dispatches on the same day to General Dix, at Fort Monroe, to Admiral Goldsborough, commanding the naval forces in the James, and to General Burnside, in North Carolina, directing all three of them to strain every nerve in order to go to McClellan's assistance. At the same time he ordered[1] Halleck to send a large portion of his forces to the rescue.

1862

As the 29th and 30th of June passed without news of any further catastrophe, the President and the Secretary of War began to think better of the situation, and concluded that it might possibly be improved by a change of base to the James. Mr. Stanton telegraphed to General Wool that it looked "more like taking Richmond than at any time before." But on the 1st of July a dispatch, dated at Turkey Bridge, arrived from General McClellan, who was still under the influence of great agitation, announcing that he is "hard pressed by superior numbers," and fearing that he shall be forced

[1] This order was afterwards revoked, on Halleck's representation that the detachment of so large a force would be equivalent to the abandonment of Tennessee. — W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., pp. 279, 285. See also Chap. XIX., p. 353 *et seq.*

to abandon his material and save his men under cover of the gunboats. "If none of us escape, we shall at least have done honor to the country. I shall do my best to save the army. Send more gunboats." While waiting for his troops to come to the new position he had chosen for them, he continued asking for reënforcements. "I need," he says, "50,000 more men, and with them I will retrieve our fortunes." The Secretary of War at once answered that reënforcements were on the way, 5000 from McDowell and 25,000 from Halleck. "Hold your ground," he says encouragingly, "and you will be in Richmond before the month is over." On the morning of the battle of Malvern, McClellan writes again, "I dread the result if we are attacked to-day by fresh troops. . . I now pray for time." It has been seen that his dread was uncalled for. Meanwhile, before hearing of the battle, the President had telegraphed:

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 280.

Ibid., p. 281.

Ibid., p. 282.

It is impossible to reënforce you for your present emergency. If we had a million of men we could not get them to you in time. We have not the men to send. If you are not strong enough to face the enemy you must find a place of security, and wait, rest, and repair. Maintain your ground if you can, but save the army at all events, even if you fall back to Fort Monroe. We still have strength enough in the country, and will bring it out.

July 1, 1862.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 71.

On the 2d, the flurry of the week having somewhat subsided, the President sent him the following:

Your dispatch of Tuesday morning induces me to hope your army is having some rest. In this hope allow me to reason with you a moment. When you ask for 50,000 men to be promptly sent you, you surely labor under some gross mistake of fact. Recently you sent papers

CH. XXIV. showing your disposal of forces made last spring for the defense of Washington, and advising a return to that plan. I find it included in and about Washington 75,000 men. Now, please be assured I have not men enough to fill that very plan by 15,000. All of Frémont's in the Valley, all of Banks's, all of McDowell's not with you, and all in Washington, taken together, do not exceed, if they reach, 60,000. With Wool and Dix added to those mentioned I have not, outside of your army, 75,000 men east of the mountains. Thus the idea of sending you 50,000, or any other considerable force, promptly is simply absurd. If in your frequent mention of responsibility you have the impression that I blame you for not doing more than you can, please be relieved of such impression. I only beg that, in like manner, you will not ask impossibilities of me. If you think you are not strong enough to take Richmond just now, I do not ask you to try just now. Save the army, material, and personnel, and I will strengthen it for the offensive again as fast as I can. The Governors of eighteen States offer me a new levy of 300,000, which I accept.

Lincoln to McClellan, July 2, 1862. W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 286.

This quiet and reasonable statement produced no effect upon the general. On the 3d he wrote again in a strain of wilder exaggeration than ever. He says:

It is of course impossible to estimate, as yet, our losses; but I doubt whether there are to-day more than 50,000 men with their colors. To accomplish the great task of capturing Richmond and putting an end to this rebellion reenforcements should be sent to me, rather much over than much less than 100,000 men. I beg that you will be fully impressed by the magnitude of the crisis in which we are placed.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 292.

The didactic, not to say magisterial, tone of this dispatch formed a not unnatural introduction to the general's next important communication to the President, laying before him an entire body of ad-

ministrative and political doctrine, in which alone, he intimated, the salvation of the country could be found: CH. XXIV.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
CAMP NEAR HARRISON'S LANDING,
VIRGINIA, July 7, 1862.

MR. PRESIDENT: You have been fully informed that the rebel army is in our front, with the purpose of overwhelming us[1] by attacking our positions, or reducing us by blocking our river communications. I cannot but regard our condition as critical, and I earnestly desire, in view of possible contingencies, to lay before your Excellency, for your private consideration, my general views concerning the existing state of the rebellion, although they do not strictly relate to the situation of this army, or strictly come within the scope of my official duties. These views amount to convictions, and are deeply impressed upon my mind and heart. Our cause must never be abandoned; it is the cause of free institutions and self-government. The Constitution and the Union must be preserved, whatever may be the cost in time, treasure, and blood. If secession is successful, other dissolutions are clearly to be seen in the future. Let neither military disaster, political faction, nor foreign war shake your settled purpose to enforce the equal operation of the laws of the United States upon the people of every State. The time has come when the Government must determine upon a civil and military policy covering the whole ground of our national trouble. The responsibility of determining, declaring, and supporting such civil and military policy, and of directing the whole course of national affairs in regard to the rebellion, must now be assumed and exercised by you, or our cause will be lost. The Constitution gives you power sufficient even for the present terrible exigency. 1862.

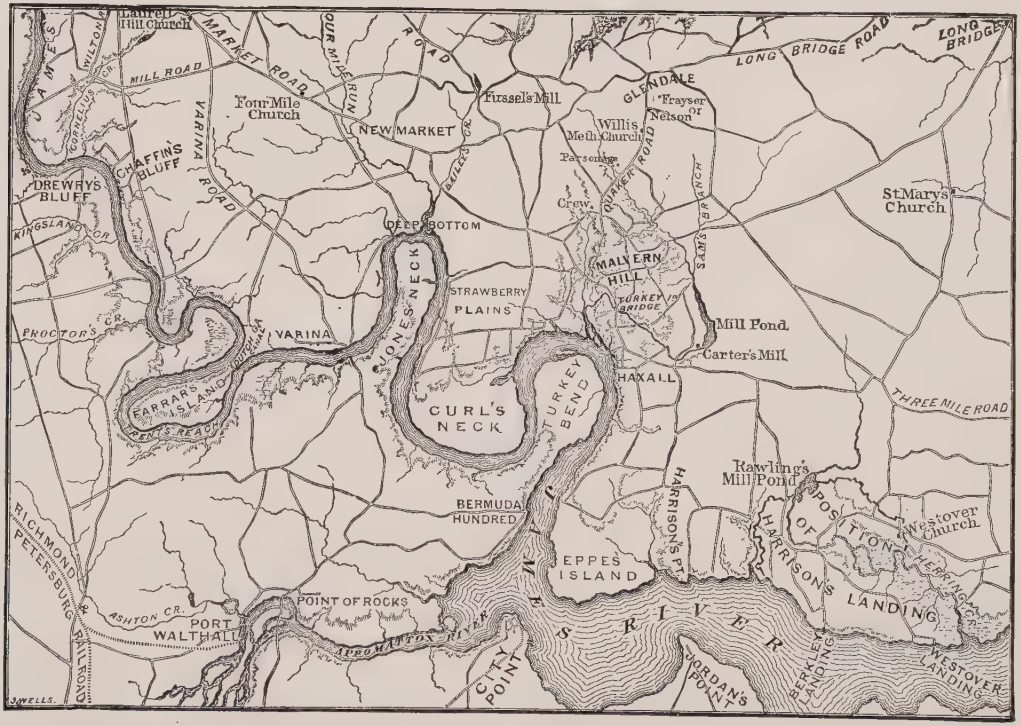
This rebellion has assumed the character of a war. As such it should be regarded, and it should be conducted upon the highest principles known to Christian civiliza-

[1] This was at a time when Lee had given up all thought of attacking the Union army at Harrison's Landing.

CH. XXIV. tion. It should not be a war looking to the subjugation of the people of any State in any event. It should not be at all a war upon population, but against armed forces and political organizations. Neither confiscation of property, political executions of persons, territorial organization of States, or forcible abolition of slavery should be contemplated for a moment.

In prosecuting the war all private property and unarmed persons should be strictly protected, subject only to the necessities of military operations; all private property taken for military use should be paid or receipted for; pillage and waste should be treated as high crimes, all unnecessary trespass sternly prohibited, and offensive demeanor by the military towards citizens promptly rebuked. Military arrests should not be tolerated, except in places where active hostilities exist; and oaths not required by enactments — constitutionally made — should be neither demanded nor received. Military government should be confined to the preservation of public order and the protection of political rights. Military power should not be allowed to interfere with the relations of servitude, either by supporting or impairing the authority of the master, except for repressing disorder, as in other cases. Slaves, contraband under the act of Congress, seeking military protection, should receive it. The right of the Government to appropriate permanently to its own service claims to slave labor should be asserted, and the right of the owner to compensation therefor should be recognized. This principle might be extended upon grounds of military necessity and security to all the slaves within a particular State, thus working manumission in such State; and in Missouri, perhaps in Western Virginia also, and possibly even in Maryland, the expediency of such a military measure is only a question of time. A system of policy thus constitutional and conservative, and pervaded by the influences of Christianity and freedom, would receive the support of almost all truly loyal men, would deeply impress the rebel masses and all foreign nations, and it might be humbly hoped that it would commend itself to the favor of the Almighty.

Unless the principles governing the further conduct of our struggle shall be made known and approved, the



REGION OF THE SEVEN DAYS' FIGHTING.—PART II.

NOTE: For Part I. see page 432.

effort to obtain requisite forces will be almost hopeless. A declaration of radical views, especially upon slavery, will rapidly disintegrate our present armies. The policy of the Government must be supported by concentrations of military power. The national forces should not be dispersed in expeditions, posts of occupation, and numerous armies; but should be mainly collected into masses and brought to bear upon the armies of the Confederate States. Those armies thoroughly defeated, the political structure which they support would soon cease to exist. CH. XXIV.

In carrying out any system of policy which you may form, you will require a commander-in-chief of the army; one who possesses your confidence, understands your views, and who is competent to execute your orders by directing the military forces of the nation to the accomplishment of the objects by you proposed. I do not ask that place for myself. I am willing to serve you in such position as you may assign me, and I will do so as faithfully as ever subordinate served superior.

I may be on the brink of eternity, and as I hope forgiveness from my Maker, I have written this letter with sincerity towards you and from love for my country.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. B. McClellan,

Major-General Commanding.

His Excellency Abraham Lincoln, President.[1]

This letter marks the beginning of General McClellan's distinctively political career. He had always been more or less in sympathy with the Democratic party, and consequently in an attitude of dormant opposition to the Administration; although, after the manner of officers of the regular service, he had taken no pronounced political attitude. In fact, on his first assuming command of the Army of the Potomac, he had seemed to be in

[1] Slight errors having crept into this letter in its manifold publications, we print it here from the original manuscript received by the President, and now in our custody.

CH. XXIV. full sympathy with the President and Cabinet, in the proceedings they thought proper to adopt for the suppression of the rebellion. He had even entered heartily into some of the more extreme measures of the Government. His orders to General Banks directing the arrest of the secessionist members of the Maryland Legislature might have been written by a zealous Republican. "When they meet on the 17th," he says, "you will please have everything prepared to arrest the whole party, and be sure that none escape." He urges upon him the "absolute necessity of secrecy and success"; speaks of the exceeding importance of the affair— "If it is successfully carried out it will go far towards breaking the backbone of the rebellion." This was in September, 1861. Later in that year he was repeatedly urged by prominent Democratic politicians to declare himself openly as a member of their party. They thought it would be to his advantage and to theirs to have the General-in-Chief of the Army of the Potomac decidedly with them. At this time he declined their overtures, but they were pressingly repeated at Yorktown and afterwards; and he appears finally to have yielded to their solicitations, and the foregoing letter was the result.

McPherson, "History of the Rebellion," p. 153.

It is not at all probable that this document was prepared during the flight from the Chickahominy, or during the first days of doubt and anxiety at Harrison's Landing. It had probably been prepared long before, and is doubtless referred to in the general's dispatch of the 20th of June, in which he says, "I would be glad to have permission to lay before your Excellency, by letter or telegraph, my views as

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 48.

to the present state of military affairs throughout the whole country." He had at that time some indefinite hope of taking Richmond; and such a manifesto as this, coming from a general crowned with a great victory, would have had a far different importance and influence from that which it enjoyed issuing from his refuge at Harrison's Bar, after a discrediting retreat. But the choice of occasion was not left to him; the letter could not be delayed forever, and such as it was, it went forth to the country as the political platform of General McClellan, and to the President as a note of defiance and opposition from the general in command of the principal army of the United States. Though more moderate in form, this letter was as mutinous in substance as the dispatch from Savage's Station. He assumes to instruct the President as to his duties and the limits of his constitutional power. He takes it for granted that the President has no definite policy, and proceeds to give him one. Unless his advice is followed "our cause will be lost." He postures as the protector of the people against threatened arbitrary outrage. He warns the President against any forcible interference with slavery. He lets him know he can have no more troops, except on conditions known and approved. He tells him plainly that "a declaration of radical views, especially upon slavery, will rapidly disintegrate our present armies." Finally, he directs him to appoint a commander-in-chief of the army, and thinks it necessary to inform him that he does not ask the place for himself.

The President, engrossed with more important affairs, paid no attention, then or afterwards, to this

CH. XXIV. letter.[1] He simply passed it by in good-natured silence. General McClellan continued his dispatches, constantly announcing an impending attack upon his position, and constantly asking for reënforcements. He continued this until General Lee withdrew his army to Richmond, a movement which General McClellan at once characterized as "a retreat."

During all the time McClellan remained at Harrison's Landing his correspondence with the Government was full of recrimination and querulousness; and his private letters which have been published since his death show an almost indecent

July 20. hostility to his superiors. He writes: "I have no faith in the Administration. . . I am tired of serving fools. . . Marcy and I have just been discuss-

McClellan's "Own Story," July 31. ing people in Washington, and conclude they are a 'mighty trifling set.' . . I begin to believe they wish this army to be destroyed. When you contrast the policy I urge in my letter to the President with that of Congress and of Mr. Pope, you can readily agree with me that there can be little natural confi-

Ibid., August 2. dence between the Government and myself. We are the antipodes of each other. I am satisfied

Ibid., August 10. that the dolts in Washington are bent on my destruction. . . My communication with Halleck was

Ibid., August 14. unsatisfactory in the extreme. He did not even

[1] McClellan in his memoirs ("Own Story," pp. 444, 446, 487), says he wrote this letter intending to send it by General Marcy to Washington, but as the President visited the army the next day, he handed it to him in person. He says Mr. Lincoln read it, "but made no comments upon it, merely saying when he had finished it, that he was obliged to me for it, or words to that effect. I do not think that he alluded further to it during his visit, or at any time after that." He sent a copy of the letter to his wife, asking her "to preserve it carefully, as a very important record," showing the political significance he attached to it.

behave with common politeness; he is a *bien mauvais sujet* — he is not a gentleman." CH. XXIV.

We need not multiply these utterances. They have already been judged by the highest authority. General Sherman says, referring to this period, "The temper of his correspondence, official and private, was indicative of a spirit not consistent with the duty of the commanding general of a great army."

"The Grand Strategy of the War of the Rebellion." "Century Magazine," Feb., 1888, p. 589.

The President had been much disturbed by the conflicting reports that reached him as to the condition of the Army of the Potomac, and he therefore resolved by a personal visit to satisfy himself of the state of affairs. He reached Harrison's Landing on the 8th of July, and while there conferred freely, not only with General McClellan himself, but with many of the more prominent officers in command. With the exception of General McClellan, not one believed the enemy was then threatening his position. Sumner thought they had retired, much damaged; Keyes that they had withdrawn to go towards Washington; Porter that they dared not attack; Heintzelman and Franklin thought they had retired; Franklin and Keyes favored the withdrawal of the army from the James; the rest opposed it. Mr. Lincoln came back bearing a still heavier weight of care. One thing that gave him great trouble was the enormous number of absentees from the army. On returning to Washington he wrote this note to General McClellan, which, like most of his notes, it is impossible to abridge :

I am told that over 160,000 men have gone into your army on the Peninsula. When I was with you the other

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day we made out 86,500 remaining, leaving 73,500 to be accounted for. I believe 23,500 will cover all the killed, wounded, and missing in all your battles and skirmishes, leaving 50,000 who have left otherwise. Not more than 5000 of these have died; leaving 45,000 of your army still alive and not with it. I believe half or two-thirds of them are fit for duty to-day. Have you any more perfect knowledge of this than I have? If I am right, and you had these men with you, you could go into Richmond in the next three days. How can they be got to you, and how can they be prevented from getting away in such numbers for the future?

July 13, 1862. W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 319.

To this note the general replied in a letter which can hardly be regarded as a satisfactory answer to the President's searching questions. He says, in general terms, that there is always a difference between the returns and the effective force of armies. He thinks, but is not certain, that the force given to him is not so much as 160,000, but admits that he has at that moment, present for duty, 88,665; absent by authority, 34,472; without authority, 3778. This is very far from the "fifty thousand with their colors" which he reported a few days before; and he gives no adequate reason for the vast aggregate of those absent by authority.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 321.

But another question, far more important and more grievous, was, what was to be done with the Army of the Potomac? General McClellan would listen to nothing but an enormous reënforcement of his army, and another chance to take Richmond. Many of his prominent officers, on the contrary, thought that an advance on Richmond under existing conditions would be ill-advised, and that for the army to remain in its present position during the months of August and September would be

more disastrous than an unsuccessful battle. The President had already placed General John Pope at the head of the Army of Virginia, in front of Washington, and he now took the resolution of sending to Corinth for General Halleck, whom he placed in chief command of the armies of the United States. This was done by an order of the 11th of July, and General Halleck was requested to start at once for Washington. As soon as he could place his command in the hands of General Grant, the next officer in rank in his department, he came on to Washington, assumed command of the army on the 23d, and the next day was sent to the camp of General McClellan, where he arrived on the 25th. CH. XXIV. 1862.

He asked the general his wishes and views in regard to future operations. McClellan answered that he proposed to cross the James River and attack Petersburg. Halleck stated his impression of the danger and impracticability of the plan, to which McClellan finally agreed. The General-in-Chief then told him that he regarded it as a military necessity to concentrate Pope's army and his on some point where they could at the same time cover Washington and operate against Richmond; unless it should be that McClellan felt strong enough to take the latter place himself with such reënforcements as would be given him. McClellan thought he would require thirty thousand more than he had. Halleck told him that the President could only promise twenty thousand, and that if McClellan could not take Richmond with that number, some plan must be devised for withdrawing his troops from their present position to some point where they could unite with General Pope without expos-

CH. XXIV. ing Washington. McClellan thought there would be no serious difficulty in withdrawing his forces for that purpose; but he feared the demoralizing influence of such a movement on his troops, and preferred they should stay where they were until sufficient reënforcements could be sent him. Halleck had no authority to consider that proposition, and told him that he must decide between advising the withdrawal of his forces to meet those of Pope, or an advance upon Richmond with such forces as the President could give him. Halleck gained the impression that McClellan's preference would be to withdraw and unite with General Pope; but after consultation with his officers he informed Halleck the next morning that he would prefer to take Richmond. He would not say that he thought the probabilities of success were in his favor, but that there was "a chance," and that he was "willing to try it." His officers were divided on the subject of withdrawing or making an attack upon Richmond. McClellan's delusion as to the number of the enemy had infected many of the most intelligent generals in his command. General Keyes, in a letter to Quartermaster-General Meigs, assured him that the enemy had two hundred thousand, more than double our number. At the same time General Meigs himself, simply from reading the Richmond newspapers and controlling their accounts with his own common-sense, had formed an estimate of the rebel force very much nearer the truth than that made by the generals at the front. He found it to consist of 152 regiments, which, at an average of 700 men — too high an average — would give a total force of 105,000. By General McClellan's

W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., pp. 337, 338.

July 27, 1862.

Ibid., p. 338.

Ibid., pp. 340, 341.

returns for the 10th of August he himself had an aggregate present of 113,000 men. CH. XXIV. W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 367.

Halleck's return to Washington was followed by a shower of telegrams from McClellan urging the reënforcement of his army. "Should it be determined to withdraw it," he says on the 30th of July, 1862. "I shall look upon our cause as lost, and the demoralization of the army certain"—a statement Ibid., p. 342. which certainly was lacking in reserve. The weight of opinion, however, among the generals of highest rank, was on the other side. General Keyes wrote in the strongest terms urging the withdrawal of the army. General Barnard, McClellan's chief of engineers, and General Franklin counseled the immediate withdrawal from the James to reunite with the forces covering the capital. Upon General Halleck's return to Washington, this course was resolved upon. General Halleck's first order in that direction was dated the 30th of July, requesting McClellan Ibid., p. 77. to send away his sick as quickly as possible. Four days afterwards, without having taken in the mean while any steps to obey the order, McClellan sent General Hooker to Malvern Hill. He drove away the Confederates from there after a sharp cavalry skirmish. This so brightened McClellan's spirits that he telegraphed to Halleck on the 5th that Aug., 1862. with reënforcements he could march his army to Richmond in five days; a suggestion to which W. R. Vol. XI., Part III., p. 359. Halleck made the curt rejoinder, "I have no reënforcements to send you."[1]

Ibid., pp. 331, 332. Ibid., Part I., p. 132.

[1] General Hooker told the Committee on the Conduct of the War a curious story about this affair. He said that after General McClellan received his orders to abandon Harrison's Landing he went to him voluntarily and suggested that, with the forces they had there, they could take Richmond, and urged him to do it. So

CH. XXIV. The order to dispose of the sick was not promptly obeyed, because General McClellan insisted upon knowing the intentions of the Government in regard to his army, and after being informed that it was to be withdrawn from the James several days more were wasted in wearisome interchange of dispatches between himself and Halleck; McClellan protesting with the greatest energy and feeling against this movement, and Halleck replying with perfect logic and temper in defense of it. In a long and elaborate dispatch, in which Halleck considered the whole subject, he referred to the representation made to him by McClellan and some of his officers that the enemy's forces around Richmond amounted to 200,000, and that McClellan had reported that they had since received large reënforcements.

> General Pope's army covering Washington [he adds] is only about 40,000. Your effective force is only about 90,000. You are thirty miles from Richmond, and General Pope eighty or ninety, with the enemy directly between you, ready to fall with his superior numbers upon one or the other as he may elect. . . If General Pope's army be diminished to reënforce you, Washington, Maryland, and Pennsylvania would be left uncovered and exposed. If your force be reduced to strengthen Pope you would be too weak to even hold the position

confident was Hooker that he was willing to take the advance, and so assured McClellan. On reaching his camp, about two hours after that interview, he says he found on his table an order from General McClellan to prepare himself with three days' rations and a supply of ammunition, and be ready to march at two o'clock the next day. "I firmly believe," said Hooker, "that order meant Richmond. I had said to McClellan that if we were unsuccessful it would probably cost him his head, but that he might as well die for an old sheep as for a lamb. . . But before the time arrived for executing that order it was countermanded." — Hooker, Testimony, Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, Pt. I., p. 579.

you now occupy. . . You say that the withdrawal from the present position will cause the certain demoralization of the army. . . I cannot understand why, . . . unless the officers themselves assist in that demoralization, which I am satisfied they will not. . . But you will reply, Why not reënforce me here so that I can strike Richmond from my present position? To do this you said at our interview that you required 30,000 additional troops. . . You finally thought that you would have "some chance" of success with 20,000. But you afterward telegraphed me that you would require 35,000. . . . To keep your army in its present position until it could be so reënforced would almost destroy it in that climate. . . In the mean time General Pope's forces would be exposed to the heavy blows of the enemy without the slightest hope of assistance from you. CH. XXIV. W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 83.

He tells McClellan in conclusion that a large number of his highest officers are decidedly in favor of the movement.

Weary at last of arguments, Halleck became more and more peremptory in his orders; and this failing to infuse any activity into the movements of McClellan, he had recourse to sharp dispatches of censure which provoked only excuses and recriminations. In some of his replies to Halleck's urgent dispatches, enjoining the greatest haste and representing the grave aspect of affairs in Northern Virginia, McClellan replied in terms that indicated as little respect for Halleck as he had shown for the President and Secretary of War. On the 6th of August, in answer to an order insisting on the immediate dispatch of a battery of artillery to Burnside, he calmly replies, "I will obey the order as soon as circumstances permit. My artillery is none too numerous now." On the 12th, little or no progress having yet been made, he says, "There 1862. Ibid., p. 79.

CH. XXIV. shall be no unnecessary delay, but I cannot manufacture vessels. . . It is not possible for any one to place this army where you wish it, ready to move, in less than a month. If Washington is in danger now, this army can scarcely arrive in time to save it. It is in much better position to do so from here than from Aquia." At the same time the Quartermaster-General reported that nearly every available steam vessel in the country was then under the control of General McClellan. Only on the 17th of August was McClellan able to telegraph that he had left his camp at Harrison's Bar, and only on the 27th of the month, when Pope's campaign had reached a critical and perilous stage, did he report himself for orders at Alexandria, near Washington.

W. R. Vol. XI., Part I., p. 88.

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Ibid., p. 91.

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